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Chapter 1: Death

The forest was quiet, not a creature made a sound. Harry shivered as a cold wind blew through him. His death was just ahead, as the seventh and final Horcrux, he had to die in order to save those he loved. Ron...Hermione...Ginny...his hand tightened on the Invisibility Cloak he wore. He wished he could tell them good-bye, but like many of his friends who died before him, he had neither the chance as well. Besides, if they found out what he was about to do, they'd keep him at Hogwarts, bound and tied. He could hear their responses to the revelation of he, Harry, being the final Horcrux.

"What? No mate, you can't be, we've gotta do something, maybe..." He could see Ron's pale face and wide eyes as he came to terms with what that meant for his best friend.

"No! Harry, oh no! We...we have to find a spell to nullify the Horcrux inside you. Harry please...don't!" He could see Hermione pulling at her hair, trying to tear through books and the remaining professors for help. Tears streaming down her face and Ginny...His heart clenched at the thought of her, he loved her so much. He loved them all so much that he was willing to die for them. The Resurrection Stone fell from his numb fingers, the figures of his parents, Lupin and Sirius faded into the night. His eyes stung with tears as he watched them fade,

"I wish none of you had to die..." Tears trickled down his face, his parents he couldn't save, but Sirius...Remus...maybe...Maybe he could have been able to save them! Save them all! Fred, Tonks, Remus, Sirius...Dumbledore...He wished he had the power to go back and save them, then he wouldn't feel so guilty right now. Guilt that they died to protect him, save him, yet they died in vain because here Harry stood, ready to go to his death. The wind swirled dead leaves about him as he heard a cold, high voice say,

"He has not arrived. Pity, I thought he would come...I was, it seems, mistaken..." Harry turned just enough around the tree to see Voldemort and his Death Eaters around a large bonfire. The flicker of the fire brought out the snake-like qualities of his face. Hagrid was bound to a tree, looking helpless as ever. Harry's heart clenched, he had hoped no whom he cared for would have to watch his death! Yet with a deep breath he put the Cloak under his robes and made sure his wand was firmly in his pocket, he had no intention of fighting. With another deep breath he cried out,

"You weren't!" With that he stepped out from behind the tree into the gleam light of the bonfire. The quietness of the forest then exploded into a sudden tension as the Death Eaters all gasped and sneered at Harry's arrival. Bellatrix jumped to her feet, looking between her Master and Harry in expectation.

"Harry NO!" boomed Hagrid; he now was fighting desperately against his bonds, making the tree shake. "What are ye doing?" Harry shot him a small smile, it was ironic, his first true friend was the one who was going to watch him die. His eyes then turned to Voldemort. The Dark wizard rose to his feet, the Elder Wand in his hand as he ran his long fingers over it. No one spoke, even the forest noise had silenced. Slowly, Harry spread his hands out, to show he was not going to fight.

"Harry Potter..." breathed Voldemort; Harry tipped his head up more so that Voldemort could see he was not afraid, he was not going to beg for his life. He was going to die, standing up, proud like his mother and father. "The Boy Who Lived..." Voldemort then tipped his head to the side as if he was a child, wondering what would happen if he proceeded. Harry's ears then went deaf; he could not hear a sound. Hagrid's desperate pleas, Voldemort's words nor the rustle of the wind through the trees. He closed his eyes as within a millisecond he saw all of those he was dying for, living and dead. A smile curved his face; maybe he would finally be at peace.

"Neither can live while the other survives..." Harry whispered, he opened his eyes and took in the last thing he would ever see, just like his parents before him.

Harry saw the mouth move and a flash of green light...and everything was gone...

Chapter 2: The Department of Mysteries....Again

Sirius was right, Harry thought vaguely as he seemed to hover over endless darkness; it didn't hurt to die at all. Darkness covered his eyes, though how much he tried, he could not open them. Was he suppose to see a bright light then find himself in the arms of his long dead parents? Wind rushed in his ears, roaring. He felt as if was falling through air like the time he fell off his broomstick in his third year. Then everything stopped, he wasn't sure he had hit the floor, if you called this the floor. He tried again to open his eyes, but only found voices whispering to him from every angle. Harry tried to catch what they were saying but it was all in such a rush that he could not.

"Har....Har...ry...Harry...Harry!" A voice called, it was female, his mother calling to him. He could almost see her, her red hair, her startling green eyes that were same, as Harry's own and her smile. Her warm, loving smile that he'd seen a hundred times in the photos given to him by Hagrid in his first year.

"Harry...you need to...wa..." called a male voice, he could feel hands grabbing him, and a smile came over Harry's lips. He could see his father, shaking him awake, eager to see his son after nearly seventeen years apart. James, his father, Harry was told that they looked similar, save for Harry's eyes. He could see them, he'd be...

"HARRY! WAKE UP YOU PRAT!" screamed a familiar voice, freckles, red hair and a face he'd known since day one at Hogwarts, swam into view. Ron. Harry's eyes snapped open. At first he could see the blurry lines of four, no, five faces peering down at him. As his vision cleared he could see it was Ron and Hermione that were screaming out his name, not his parents. Leaning just over them he could see the forms of Neville, Luna and Ginny all looked worriedly down at him.

Harry sat up slowly to clear the dizziness in his head. His scar suddenly stung with fierce pain making him gasp. He couldn't help but notice they were nervously watching his every movement. Did Voldemort bring his body to the castle? Why was his scar hurting, shouldn't Voldemort's soul been destroyed with Harry's? The dim lights around him were not like the bright lights in the castle, where were they?

"Where's Voldemort? The Death Eaters?" murmured Harry. Ron and Hermione looked at each other shooting a strange look at each other. Neville made a kind of choking noise.

"Harry...there's no one here, just the six of us but..." said Hermione hesitantly, touching his shoulder. "We need to get out of here, Sirius isn't here." Harry's head shot up at the mention of his godfather's name. Of course Sirius wouldn't be here, he died nearly two years ago when...Harry's gut clenched. Harry's scar then burned with a quiet; 'Ow!' he slapped his hand over his forehead. He found that when he pulled his hand away, there was blood on his palm.

"Your scar is bleeding!" cried Ron, pulling his hand toward him, "Bloody hell!" Harry yanked his arm away from Ron,

"It's alright Ron," Ron stared at him wide eyed. Ginny then leaned over Ron, fear in her eyes. "It doesn't hurt." He dabbed the open scar several times to find within a matter of seconds the old wound healed instantly.

"Has this happened before?" Harry shook his head, as he tried to push himself to his feet,

"No, but—" Harry clenched his right hand to force himself up only to find there was something in his hand. When he turned to look at it, his blood ran cold. In his hand was a glowing orb of blue and white mist. He had held this before, in the Department of Mysteries the night Sirius.... Harry then raised the Prophecy to eye level; the ominous words of the Prophecy that determined his destiny, his life, his death and the deaths of his parents rang in his ears. "Where are we?" he asked in a small whisper, dreading the answer.

"The Department of Mysteries, remember? You fainted," he heard Luna's soft voice say, "You fainted when you held that orb in your hand then you..."

"Started twitching..." finished Ginny, her eyes wide. Harry felt his limbs go numb as he stared at the orb in his hands. The last thing he remembered is that he walked to his death, Voldemort killed him! Yet, here he was on the floor of the Department of Mysteries. Harry looked up at his friends and hesitantly asked,

"What is today?" Ron blinked several times giving Harry this 'Are you out of your mind?' look. Hermione sighed and slowly answered,

"June 2nd, 1996...Harry are you alright? Did you hit your head?" He didn't even hear her. Pain was welling in his chest, Harry's body began to shake, today was the day that Sirius died. Harry then forced himself to his feet, unaware of his friends getting to their own feet to follow him, but Harry did not go anywhere.

He paced up and down the small row of glowing orbs. Had he been sent into the past? He remembered shortly before he died he wished he could save everyone who died for him, because....because he would have to die anyway, why risk more lives? Harry then froze, he had been sent back. Sent back to save Sirius, Dumbledore, to destroy the Horcruxes before Voldemort could tear the Wizarding World apart again.

Harry stared down at the Prophecy in his hand, he didn't need it, he knew his fate—he lived it already. He looked up toward the darkened ceiling, closing his eyes he made a vow. No one, no one would die for him. Not Sirius, not Dumbledore, not Remus, no one. If someone was going to die, it would be him. He would protect them; he would not let himself be protected anymore. Though he may be fifteen again, his seventeen-year-old mind and knowledge would be put to the test, to save those he loved.

"Harry?" he heard Hermione ask him. He could see the fear in their pale faces, he dimly remembered this was the first major battle they, Dumbledore's Army, would be in. Harry turned to face them with a small smile then a wince. His scar was still stinging, meaning if he was right, he and Voldemort's souls were still one. He could hear them moving toward him to help him, when Harry shook his head.

"I'm fine, just shaken from the fall." He then looked down the corridor, he had get them all out of here, without any of them from getting injured or.... "We'd better hurry, Death Eaters will descend on us any minute." Pulling his wand from his school robes he lit it with a quick Lumos. His friends followed suit, Harry then began to lead them down the corridors of the Prophecy Hall, praying his memories were correct. They were only seconds away from the door when a crack of Apparition caught his attention. Standing in their way were two Death Eaters, Lucius Malfoy and Bellatrix Lestrange.

Hermione screamed, Bellatrix smiled evilly. Harry felt his hand clench his aloft wand tight. He wanted to kill her; Sirius's killer in his original timeline, if you could call it that, or his would-be killer. No! Harry told himself, He is not dying tonight! Malfoy began to walk toward the students, a thin, gleeful smile on his face, he thought they had them cornered.

"Move another step, do anything to us..." said Harry raising the Prophecy over his head, "I'll smash it!" Bellatrix smiled then cackled as Malfoy stopped.

"He knows how to play!" Yet, she kept her wand aimed at the orb just in case Harry should drop it. Neville growled under his breath to see the woman who tortured his parents to insanity.

"Drop it!" Neville hissed. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw his friends raise their wands at the Death Eaters, waiting for Harry to give the order. Several more pops broke the silence; they were surrounded at every angle. They would have to fight their way out. Harry didn't want that, last time had proved near fatal.

"Damn it!" breathed Harry, just like last time. Malfoy then smiled, now feeling at ease with the children. He approached them again, his hand held out for the Prophecy. He stopped inches away from Harry, yet Harry's eyes were on the arm behind his back.

"Now, Potter, don't be a fool. Give me the Prophecy or—" Harry raised the orb above his head with a smile. Malfoy then stopped again, his eyes on the orb. Harry heard Ron whispering defensive spells under his breath, his wand hand was shaking.

"That won't work on me this time! I already know what the Prophecy says!" Malfoy's eyes widened, "The Prophecy instantly tells it to the person whom it was meant for. And it was meant for me," Harry lied, a sly grin on his face. He had to stall the Death Eaters long enough for the Order to get here, to distract the Death Eaters so Harry could save Sirius. "I don't need this! So, let us go, unless you want your master to go empty handed. Back off!" Luna whipped her head around alarmed and in a loud whisper said,

"You know what it says?" Harry kept his eyes on the Death Eaters. He raised the Prophecy higher above his head, ready to smash it at

a moments notice. He then flashed a scared Hermione a grin whispering back at Luna,

"Later." Malfoy growled at Harry's taunt and pulled out his wand from behind his back. Hermione gasped. The group took a collective step back, only to find their way blocked at all sides.

"Harry," whispered Ginny, "We're blocked. Smash the thing!" Harry gave her a small nod. The nod meant be ready. Malfoy then began to advance on the group, his wand pointed at Harry's heart

"You stupid boy, Accio—"

"NOW!" screamed Harry. Red lights blasted everywhere, as Stupefy was the spell of choice from all of the students. The spells hit some the Death Eaters full in the face, others blocked it. Harry then took off running; he could hear the harsh breathing and pounding of his friends' footsteps behind him. Unlike last time, this time he knew where he was going. It seemed as if his memories were moving in slow motion guiding him where they needed to go.

"Go!" he heard Ron scream. Harry looked over his shoulder to see two masked Death Eaters gaining on them. Hermione flicked her wand and a shower of orbs descended on the Death Eaters, causing them to fight them off.

"Brilliant!" huffed Ron, Hermione blushed. Unfortunately, they were not the only Death Eaters who escaped the stunning spell. No more than a minute later were two more Death Eaters blocking their escape. Harry leaned over slightly as Ginny's arm forced him away, she took aim,

"Reduco!" cried Ginny; the blast forced the Death Eaters fly backwards slamming them into the wall, knocking them both out cold.

"Well done!" said Neville patting Ginny on the back. Ginny then turned to find Harry still staring at her. Harry flushed then turned away; he had to remember in this time, he was not dating Ginny...yet. Ahead a familiar door loomed ahead, Harry's head screamed that this had to be the way out.

"Here!" he cried, reaching for the handle, it was locked. Harry swore under his breath then remembered the first spell Hermione ever used, "Alohomora!" The door swung open, Harry allowed his friends in first. He then stepped inside slamming and locking the door behind him.

"Look! Stairs!" cried Luna pointing to stone stairs that led upstairs. While his companions breathed sighs of relief, Harry's eyes were locked on the stone archway with a thin veil swinging side to side. They were in the Death Chamber; once again he led them to the wrong door.

"Oh no..." Harry slumped to the ground as memories of that night, of this night, flooded him. His breath came in short gasps as his head spun. The Veil, Sirius' laughing face as he fell through the Veil, Remus holding him back. The pain, the pain...begging Dumbledore to end his life. Seeing him, Hermione knelt beside him.

"Harry? Are you alright? Were you hit?" Harry kept shaking his head to fight off the tears.

"No, no, I just..." Harry shoved the Prophecy into his pocket; he made a mental note if he got out of here alive to smash the damn thing with his own hands. Harry then got to his feet, gripping his wand tightly. The still air then began to swirl, Harry had felt this before, they were coming...

"Get behind me, NOW!" screamed Harry, pointing his wand to the air. He could feel his friends behind them, wands raised to the ceiling. Harry repeated his vow, over and over again. No one was going to die! Then, they were attacked, from all sides came whirls of darkness. Harry kept throwing defensive spells to stop them; he could hear his friends trying the same thing. Suddenly Harry's face stung, he felt blood streaming down his face. Then it was gone. Harry blinked to see the Death Eaters around the chamber, each one holding his friends captive, wands to their heads.

"No..." whispered Harry. Malfoy then moved toward Harry, a wicked smile gleaming on his face.

"Let's make this simple. Give me the Prophecy, or watch your friends die." Malfoy then held out his hand. All Harry could hear was the blood pounding in his ears. He couldn't let them die, not like this!

He'd been able to get them out of Department without a scratch, unlike last time. He could feel the warm weight the Prophecy in his pocket. He had stall...

Seeing Harry's hesitation to obey, Malfoy sneered. "Well then Potter, let's see how you will see things when one of your friends is under the Cruitatus Curse." Harry made a movement forward to find a wand at his heart. In turn Harry had his wand at Malfoy's face, he was ready to curse him when...The screams, the screams....

Harry reeled back as he watched all of them. Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville and Luna screaming, pleading under the Curse. Malfoy turned to look at Harry with a blank face, he was the one who could call them off. Though it had been only seconds, to Harry, it felt like an eternity.

"STOP!" screamed Harry, falling to his knees, not like this, not like this. Malfoy waved a hand and the screams stopped. The five students slumped to their knees, still being held up by a Death Eater. All save one were out cold. Oddly enough Neville was still awake, like his parents, unwilling to give in.

"Don't give it to them, Harry!" croaked Neville, he was promptly stunned to shut him up. Harry looked up through the tears in eyes to see Ron and Hermione slumped, out cold from the pain. With a shaking hand Harry reached into his pocket and pulled out the Prophecy. Malfoy's eyes gleamed. A bile of rage built in Harry's mouth as he reached out to give Malfoy the Prophecy. The orb was then snatched from Harry's hand. Malfoy smiled as he held onto the Prophecy tightly,

"Your reward Potter. Crucio!" White hot pain then licked its way through Harry's body. He was burning in fire, acid—every nerve, muscle, bone and cell on fire. He could vaguely hear through his own screams, the cries of his friends as they watched him writhe in agony.

"Bastard! Stop it! He gave you what you wanted!" screamed Ron. He kicked and struggled in the grasp of the Death Eater holding him, screaming every known swear word at Malfoy.

"Please, stop it! Please!" sobbed Hermione weakly, barely able to stand. The Death Eater holding her yanked on her hair causing her to cry out.

"Leave her alone!" cried Ron. Within a moment the red head was silenced as a Death Eater put his wand at Hermione's throat, stopping her whimpering.

"Shut up, Mudblood!" Ron growled under his breath, his eyes flickering back and forth between Harry and Hermione, fear in his eyes.

"Stop it!" screamed Ginny and Luna. The two of them tried to shake off their captors but were still weak from their own exposure.

"Hang on Harry! Be strong!" cried Neville, near tears at seeing one more person he cared about under the pain of that curse. Malfoy increased the volume of the spell on Harry. Harry twisted side-to-side, kicking and punching the air as if to fend off the pain. The agony continued what seemed to hours then through the pain Harry heard numerous pops and cries of spells, the Order was here.

"Stupefy," said a familiar voice. The curse instantly ended leaving Harry's entire body in numbing pain. He was still twitching and slowly regained his body panting for breath, through his blurry eyes he saw a person he believed he would never see again.

Chapter 3: Sirius

Just around the horrified and stunned Malfoy, his vision returning he could see a figure. Dressed all in black, his black hair falling to shoulder length, wand raised. The face was set in a determined look but the grey eyes were cold. The man was Sirius Black, best friend of Remus Lupin and James Potter, Harry's father. The boys, including the traitor Peter, were known as the Mauraders. Sirius was an Animagus, a dog called Padfoot. Sirius was Harry's godfather, whom he considered a mix of father and brother and, by his parents' will, his formal guardian. Tonight, Sirius was taking on that role of guardian. A role that before, Harry was glad to let Sirius have, but not tonight. Tonight, he, Harry, needed to be the guardian, he would not allow his godfather's death to cloud his conscience again.

"Sirius..." breathed Harry. Sirius walked around Malfoy in front of Harry and coldly said, "Stay away from my godson!" He then threw a punch at Malfoy that hit in right in the nose, breaking it, blood spraying. Malfoy tumbled backwards away from Sirius and Harry, still stunned. Trembling Harry tried to get to his feet, spells started to shoot their way. The Prophecy fell from Malfoy's hand as he fell and landed at Harry's feet. Quickly picking it up he shoved it into the pocket of his robes.

"Come on!" Sirius grabbed Harry under his arm, pulling him behind a wall just to their left. Spells and curses nearly missed them as they finally found sanctuary behind the wall. Breathing hard Harry leaned against the wall. "Are you alright?" asked Sirius. Harry felt cold hands grab either side of his face and forced him to look up to see concern in his godfather's grey eyes.

An overwhelming sense of guilt and love overpowered Harry. Tears bottled in his eyes that he quickly dashed away. Without any sense of the place or what was going on, Harry flung himself into Sirius' arms. He'd thought he'd never see him again and now here he was. He squeezed his godfather tightly, murmuring apologies that in Harry's mind, were long over due, into Sirius's robes. Sirius tensed in Harry's arms just for a moment he then smiled and hugged Harry back.

"If that is a thank you then, you're welcome!" Yet, they remained like that for a moment, a scream then pulled them apart. Harry and Sirius both pulled out their wands and entered the fray. "Stay with

me!" screamed Sirius. Out of the corner of his eye he saw his friends all ducking behind a wall, shooting spells to help the Order members. Harry breathed a little easier, they were safe.

Tonks and Remus were trying to protect his friends, telling them to run for the exit, but they were blocked from all sides. The Death Eaters were beating the Order, mostly, while a few chosen Order members were taking out Death Eaters. Harry kept looking toward his friends, but found he could not help them. He could not leave Sirius, last time he did and it had been fatal.

"Don't worry, they'll be fine," murmured Sirius, seeing his godson's eyes land continually on his friends. Harry once again found himself back to back with Sirius, fighting off a bleeding Malfoy and Goyle. Harry kept using a mix of offensive and defensive spells to ward off Goyle. His battles in the past three years helped Harry improve his dueling skills. Harry even thought about using the dangerous Sectumsempra spell, but thought against it. He finally hit the stunning spell right between Goyle's eyes. The lug of a Death Eater fell back with crash.

"Nice one, James!" cried Sirius laughing as Goyle fell to the floor. Harry was not caught off guard by this, last time he was. Last time he was surprised that his godfather had called him by his father's name. Yet, Harry looked so much like his father that he wasn't surprised in the heat of battle Sirius had mistaken the two. This time, he was ready for the outburst. Sirius was looking at Harry and didn't see Malfoy raise his wand in time. Harry's heart lurched as a scream of 'Look out!' nearly reached his lips. Too late.

"Diffindo!" spat Malfoy; the spell hit Sirius in the shoulder, forming a minor cut. Harry felt his blood boil with rage. Sirius staggered back in pain.

"Expelliarmus!" cried Harry over Sirius' shoulder, knocking Malfoy's wand out of his hand. Sirius then flicked his wand and blasted Malfoy away, slamming him into the wall. Sirius then gripped shoulder, blood staining his fingers. Seeing Harry's horrified face he gave him a small smile.

"I'm fine."

"Sirius Black. The family traitor!" screamed Bellatrix turning her wand on the pair, her eyes gleaming. Harry hadn't even realized she was there, had he noticed her, he would have cursed her into oblivion. Swearing under his breath at not being aware of his surroundings, Harry then threw himself in front of Sirius pointing his wand at her.

"Harry, what?" Sirius then elbowed him out of the way, pushing Harry behind him. "She's too powerful for you." Sirius aimed his wand at Bellatrix, his face contorted with rage and disgust. "You're no relative of mine." Bellatrix laughed her high cruel laugh. The hair on the back of Harry's neck stood up.

"Protecting idy bitty Harry, Sirius?" teased Bellatrix, her eyes landing on Harry, raising her wand toward him. No, thought Harry, Don't take the bait Sirius she's—Too late again. Seeing his cousin's eyes fall on Harry, Sirius knew his godson was a prize to her. Dead or alive. He then shifted himself in front of Harry, shielding him from her gaze.

"You won't touch him." Bellatrix's eyes gleamed brightly which seemed to say, 'We'll see.'

"Sirius please listen—" Harry begged trying to get him to listen. He had to listen, he couldn't die, Harry wouldn't let him. Sirius then shot him such a look that silenced the words in his mouth.

"So, you're the same thing to me, Black. A good for nothing, traitor, relative!" With that she waved her wand and purple light shot out of it. Sirius blocked the spell then erupted into a fierce duel with Bellatrix. Harry felt his breath come in sharply, causing his head to spin. No, this could not happen, not again. He began to chase them, he had to stop her, stop Sirius, this could not happen...

"Stupefy!" screamed Harry as he tried to intervene, but Bellatrix flicked the spell back at Harry. He just had enough time to duck out of its path in time. Head spinning, he quickly got to his feet. He started to move toward the two duelers when Remus grabbed him from behind.

"No, you can't! You'll get hurt! Sirius will never forgive the Order or me if you get hurt!" The werewolf cried, holding Harry back. Harry fought against him as memories from that night swirled about his head. Remus holding him back, just like this. Harry screaming at the

top of his lungs, "He's not dead, HE'S NOT DEAD!" Trying to fight him off, to go to the Veil, reach in and pull his godfather from the Veil, laughing at his clumsy feet. Numbly, Harry then aimed his wand at Remus' hand that wrapped around his torso and looked at him,

"Sorry, Remus, Diffindo." He cut Remus' hand; Remus let Harry go in order to grab his injured hand, and then realizing what he done, cried out,

"Harry NO!" The world seemed to swirl as time slowed down, Harry's breath caught in his chest as he ran, the shouts and warnings of his friends and the Order members dimming in his ears. He could see his friends fending off unmasked Avery and Nott. Tonks and Kingsley fighting off Crabbe and Lestrage. Remus yelling at Moody to stop Harry before he got himself killed. It was all a blur the only thing that was not a blur was Bellatrix and Sirius fighting. Picking up his pace, they were nearly the Veil. Pushing his body to the maximum, Harry's arms and legs pumped so hard it ached. Adrenaline pumped through Harry's veins, denying him the pain.

He was upon them, Sirius was laughing and teasing Bellatrix, which mad her angrier. Harry, remembered that. He's not going to die, he's not going to die! Harry chanted again and again. Raising his wand he pointed it at Bellatrix, he had to distract her for a moment. All was silent, only the sound Harry heard was the blood pounding in his ears and his mental chant of 'He's not going to die!'

"Confundus!" The spell Bellatrix in the back, causing her trip and fall to the ground. Sirius was so close to the Veil that the wind blew at his hair. Now was his chance. Harry dove forward, putting his full weight and force behind his body. Sirius barely noticed him until it was too late. Harry shoved Sirius—hard— causing his godfather to fly through the air for a brief moment before crashing to the floor, rolling away from the Veil until he landed just in front of his friends' shelter. Using his Quidditch skills as a seeker and the years of ducking away his cousin Dudley's fist, Harry landed on his left shoulder and rolled onto the floor, then turned to face his godfather's would be killer.

Harry's left shoulder throbbed painfully, probably bruised it badly. Getting to his feet he pointed his wand at Bellatrix, who stared in shock at Harry's wand at her temple. Harry felt like crowing, he had prevented Sirius from dying and he now had Bellatrix at his hand.

He was going to make her pay, for taking Sirius away from him two years ago, for nearly taking him away again, for Neville's parents, for—

"HARRY!" screamed Sirius, Harry turned to look at his godfather but did not register the danger. Suddenly a spell hit Harry's chest. He was stunned, he couldn't move. He had felt this before. A June night at the top of the Astronomy tower, Dumbledore stunning him to prevent him from...

Harry's eyes landed on a shadowy figure whose wand was still aimed at Harry. Bellatrix smiled at first but then it flickered to anger.

"Wormtail! What the hell are you doing here?" The figure walked out from behind the shadows, a balding man with watery eyes and rat like teeth. Remus and Sirius quickly whipped their wands at the man they had once called a friend, Peter Pettigrew. Anger boiled in Harry's veins as he tried hard to shut down the memories of that night in the graveyard, of what Peter did to his parents. Remus then charged Peter, he did not say a word, only the anger in his eyes and face foretold anything.

Harry watched as they began to duel, it wasn't much of a contest. Remus clearly had the upper hand. Despite being a Death Eater and Voldemort's servant for fifteen years, he had learned little or nothing in the way of dueling or curses. Harry couldn't help but smile seeing Remus advancing on Peter, Sirius pointed his wand at Bellatrix, fear and anger in his eyes.

"Bellatrix, step away from Harry," It was then Harry saw the idea form in her head. He was about to die, again, twice in the same day. The sneer filled her face and the triumph in her eyes before she raised her wand. Harry could do nothing. Before Sirius could react Bellatrix pointed her wand at Harry and he was hit full in the chest by a blue-white light. Screams filled his ears as sound went out.

He was falling backwards, Sirius falling through the Veil flashed over and over in his mind again, yet this time it was him. Time slowed as he fell back. He saw Remus turn aghast and horrified. His friends screaming, Sirius running toward him reaching for him, Bellatrix laughing. The scene reversed in his head again to that night. He was about to die, as Sirius did. Harry tried to grab onto something as he fell back, he only felt the smooth sides of the archway. He looked

up to see the Veil swinging over him and the coldness of the vortex of death behind him. Voices whispered in his ear as he fully fell through. The breath was sucked from his lips and he began to fade...If this was price to pay to save Sirius, then he had paid it. Two Horcruxes were gone now, Dumbledore, Ron, Hermione, Sirius, they'd find the others.

"HAAAARRRRRRYYYYY!" he heard numerous voices scream from an echoing distance as he fell farther and farther from the light. Tears trickled down his face as he smiled sadly.

"Good-bye..." he mouthed, fading once more into blackness....

Chapter 4: The Veil

Blackness was all around Harry. Mists swirled around him. He couldn't breathe, he couldn't see. Everything was getting colder. At least all his friends were safe, with that he could be happy that he was dying. He was experiencing what Sirius experienced as he lay dying. Yet it tugged at his heart that before he had slipped through people calling out his name. He tried to suck in a breath but found it was cold and putrid, the smell of rotting bodies. He then held his breath, his heart pounding in his ears. His heartbeat was starting to become sluggish, his body becoming cold. Then...it hit him....

He couldn't die, he couldn't die yet! He alone had to destroy the Horcruxes. He had to ensure that all of his loved ones survived. He had to save everyone else who had died for him. It was what he had to do. Harry began to struggle against the darkness. Why was he so content with dying? Was this the power of the Veil? To prevent it's victims from returning to the world of the living? Harry found the more he struggled, the colder it seemed. As if cold hands were holding him down.

The cold hands felt as if they were squeezing his throat, sucking the very breath from his lungs. Harry thrashed and kicked, but came in contact with nothing but air. He was dying! His heartbeat reverberated in his ears, ticking down to the last thump. Flailing Harry opened his eyes only to see blinding darkness. He could hear the loud voices of the dead swirling about him; faces of those long dead stared at him.

"Please!" Harry screamed to the abyss of darkness, "Someone help me!" Harry then felt ice-cold hands squeezing his throat harder. The last ounce of air in Harry's lungs whooshed out and....

"Harry....Harry..." called a voice in the distance. Harry blinked, it was just his imagination. Memories of his friends calling for him as he fell. Tears bottled in his eyes, he would never see his friends again! Harry stopped struggling as the coldness settled into his limbs. He was wheezing for breath. He had been prepared to die before, but not now....

A warm bright light winked in the distance, Harry weakly turned his head to see it coming closer and closer to him. At first Harry was vaguely reminded of the Patronus charm. As it got closer he could

see something, the outline of two people. Were they Angels of Death, come to take him to his everlasting rest? A warm hand then clenched tightly onto Harry's right hand. The warm light seemed to emanate around him, filling him with warmth. He found he could breathe properly again; his heartbeat was no longer slow. As his body grew warmer Harry sighed, as he sank into the warmth not the dark.

Chapter 5: Mum....Dad?

"What do we do, James?" Harry heard a soft female voice say, "He isn't waking up yet. Maybe we were..." The woman's voice choked and he heard a sob instead of words. Harry felt a warm hand squeeze his very tightly. Who was this woman and why was she worried about him?

"You worry too much, Lily. He is breathing, you felt his pulse. He was seconds near death, give him a few minutes to come around," murmured a male voice. Harry's forehead wrinkled. James....Lily...? Why were these names so familiar to him? He felt hands smoothing out his hair, fingers running over his cheeks. It was so soothing yet, who were these people? Harry slowly opened his eyes to see a glowing light to his right and two faces swam into view.

They were leaning over him, worried expressions on their faces. Harry's vision cleared to see a man with black hair that stuck up every direction, glasses framed hazel eyes. From what he could see he was wearing a white shirt that was slightly unbuttoned, black pants, shoes and a black robe. Though his eyes were full of fear, worry and apprehension, he was smiling a wide smile all the while. To his right was a woman, teary eyed. Long dark, red hair fell down her shoulders and tickled Harry's face. She was pale, very pale which made the almond shaped green eyes stand out. She wore a white shirt, a black skirt, boots and robe.

"Harry? Sweetheart?" the woman whispered quietly using her right hand to brush his bangs off his eyes. Harry's heart leapt in his chest, he felt his cheeks burn. These weren't just any people, they were his parents! The parents he only knew through memories of Remus and Sirius, through pictures and...Harry swallowed, his throat felt raw and dry.

"Mum....Dad?" Harry croaked. Lily Potter smiled and nodded her head. James' smiled widened. He slowly reached out toward him, he was hesitant. Harry just smiled at him. They last time they had seen Harry in the flesh was when he was a year and two months year old baby not a fifteen year old teenager!

"I don't bite Dad," James began to laugh loudly that it echoed around him. Lily smiled, her eyes never leaving Harry's face. Harry turned to

look at her, looking into the eyes that were the same as his, he felt...safe.

"Come on, Harry, sit up," Harry felt James reach under his back and slowly helped him up. Harry's head spun for a few moments and then it cleared. Lily and James Potter sat in silence as they waited for their son to get his bearings. Harry looked around they were sitting in nothing but blackness. His eyes then landed on his parents. He could feel the worry dripping off of them, he smiled at them.

"I'm fine, just a little shaken, that's all." Even though he was sitting, dead, in darkness he was with his parents and he felt safe. Utterly safe, he only felt safe at Hogwarts or with Sirius. This was a nice change considering the circumstances. Harry then blinked to find tears rolling down his face. Blushing, for he wished his parents not to see him crying, Harry raised a hand to rub his eyes to find, his hand was glowing.

"What the..." He looked down; his entire body was enwrapped in a warm glow. The light was strongest where his hand was joined with his mother's. Lily squeezed his hand tightly. Harry had read in Muggles books and seen on Muggle T.V. shows that the dead were always surrounded by a glow of light. Even the Hogwarts ghosts glowed! "Am I....am I dead?" Harry asked hesitantly, wondering why his parents weren't glowing. Lily shook her head.

"No, you are not dead, Harry." James then settled himself in front of Harry, his eyes now serious. Harry then looked between his parents, a confused look on his face.

"But I saw a light, I'm glowing I must—" Lily again shook her head.

"No, Harry the light you saw a few minutes ago was us, coming to rescue you," James placed a hand on Harry's shoulder. Harry jumped at being touched. James' hand was a warm and solid weight on his shoulder, as if he was alive. Harry had to be dead! "Harry," said James softly in a commanding voice, Harry looked up, hazel and green met.

"Did Dumbledore explain to you what happened that night?" James' voice was tight, almost painful to listen to, "The night your mother and I died?" Harry gave a small nod, sorrow and pain began to build in chest, making his heart hurt. Harry bit his lip; he didn't want to go

over this...again. A hand reached out and gently cupped Harry's face. Lily Potter looked down at her son sadly, but did not remove her hand from under Harry's chin. He needed to understand what she was about to say.

"The night we died, as Dumbledore told you, when I protected you with my own life. I gave you a shield of ancient magic that would not allow anyone with a dark or evil soul touch you. Making you untouchable to Voldemort." Harry did not stop his mother. Even though he knew this already, he just wanted to hear her voice. The only time he could hear it was when a Dementor got close to Harry, her screaming, pleading voice before she died. Harry's eyes never left Lily's face nor did Lily's eyes stray from his face. "That bond, by shedding my blood to protect you, enabled you to be spared from death. Here, in the Realm of the Veil, that still applies. As long as you keep hold of my hand, your life force stays within you."

"So...you are keeping me alive? Keeping just my soul alive?" Harry asked quietly, pointing to their locked hands. Lily's eyebrows shot up. James shot him a strange look. Harry then flushed and looked to the floor muttering, "Never mind..." He did not need his parents finding out that he was the seventh Horcrux.

"Yes," replied James for his wife, he then pulled out of his robes a wand, "So, no matter what Harry James Potter, do not let go of your mother's hand." Harry's eyes were on his father's wand, but he was dead, how did he have a wand? Seeing his son's eyes on the wand James smirked, "Though our life wands are still at Godric's Hollow, death wands are given to wizards and witches upon death." With a tap of the wand on Lily and Harry's joined hands, Harry felt warmth spread through his entire hand and wrist.

Harry tried to tug his hand and fingers away from his mother's but found they were glued together. Harry shot his father an odd look.

"I know most teenaged boys don't want to hold their mother's hands but we can't take any chances." Harry didn't mind, he was with his parents, real and whole. He then looked up into his mother's eyes. They were rimmed with tears. Lily then pulled him into a one armed hug.

Harry felt his eyes sting with tears, she was not an image in a mirror, a picture or a ghost but whole. She smelled of a strange perfume,

like lilies and something that was familiar that he could not place. Harry squeezed his eyes tightly to keep in the tears. He felt himself being pulled back to a time and place he never remembered, a happier time. Harry wrapped his free arm tight around his mother. He didn't want to let her go.

"Mum..." He felt Lily tense then squeeze him back even tighter, "I don't mind holding your hand." Lily laughed. Harry felt her pull away. Tears were streaming down her face.

"My little Harry..." She then leaned in kissing his brow; it was the first kiss he had ever received from his mother that he remembered. Harry then felt a hand on his head, fingers going through Harry's hair. Harry turned to look at his father, smiling.

"You have grown so much," said James, ruffling his son's hair. Harry reached out toward the father Sirius and Remus had described for hours upon hours. He felt quite like a child, but he didn't care, this was his chance! James moved forward and embraced his son. James placed his cheek against the crown on Harry's head. Harry felt safe, as if his father had done this before. He smelled of cologne and pine. Harry smiled, Prongs to the end. "We've been watching over you since the day we died. You are a quite a brave boy, stubborn but brave."

"And has his father's tendency for trouble making," replied Lily with a mix between a smile and scowl. Harry flushed, his own parents before had never disciplined him and it was strange. James laughed at Harry's blush.

"Don't let her get you down!" Lily rolled her eyes, moving closer to her son and husband.

"Jimmy, don't encourage him!" James bowed to his wife, mockingly.

"Well he is Prongs Jr. after all. I'm surprised Sirius hasn't—" As James talked he ruffled Harry's hair some more. Though Harry felt like a dog in a way, he didn't mind. James then pulled up Harry's bangs and showed his scar, James gasped and stopped midsentence. Harry watched his parents' eyes flick up to the scar on his forehead. Harry tried to flatten his bangs down over the scar. James' eyes hardened, "That's were the bastard..." Lily squeezed

Harry's hand. Her left hand reached out and stroked the scar.

"Stop it," muttered Harry, blushing pulling his bangs down again. He looked up at Lily again, her eyes were soft with love, she reached out and caressed his face.

"You have no need to hide it from us, Harry. You have grown and matured so quickly. I'm sorry you had no childhood. Your father and I wished that we could have raised you. Your aunt and uncle were not the people we chose to raise you if something happened to us." Lily's eyes hardened on the mention of the Dursleys, Harry felt a lump form in his throat. If they had been watching him, then did they see the years of abuse and endless punishment the Dursleys placed on Harry?

"Stupid Muggle bastards," growled James, Harry noticed his mother didn't even correct him about her sister, "If I had a chance to I'd..." James was red in the face now with anger. His hazel eyes bright with rage, his knuckles white over his wand.

"But we can't James," Lily reached out and stroked James hand. "I'd like to tell Petunia a thing or two but we can't and Harry..." Her eyes softened as they landed on her son, "Harry has more grievances than we do." In comfort, Harry squeezed his mother's hand.

"If Sirius didn't land himself in Azkaban, then Harry would have lived with him. Better than that sister of yours!" spat James. Finally the anger drained out of Harry's father. Harry then smiled,

"The Dursleys are scared of me now. Now that I'm a wizard." James smiled at Harry; his eyes flashing the way Sirius's did when he was up to something.

"Damn right they should be scared." Harry couldn't help but feel so happy. His heart was swelling with joy it would burst, his parents were just as they were described to those who knew them best! "That's why we picked Sirius to be your godfather! We knew Sirius would protect you no matter what." Harry felt his gut clench, Sirius did protect him no matter what. It cost him his life before... Harry looked to see his mother nod and smile,

"Even I agreed to it, even though I was a bit worried on how Sirius would handle a child." Lily looked up toward the sky and sighed. She could remember the times Sirius pranced about their house as Padfoot, Harry on his back, gripping his fur in his tiny fists. The number of times the baby wobbled off the dog's back, giving Lily more than one chance to die of a heart attack. But Sirius always transformed back at even the smallest wobble, rolled over and caught the squealing baby. Lily then looked down back down at her son, no longer a baby. "But, he has shown you and taught you some quite useful things. Even if it has led you to trouble, for example the Marauders Map..." her eyes landed on her husband, James gave a weak smile.

"Still, you are brave and courageous on your own." Then James' smile then faltered, Lily sat beside Harry and wrapped her free arm around her son. "So, you fell through the Veil..." Harry felt his stomach tighten; he looked at the floor and nodded. James sighed. "It is not your job to protect Sirius, Harry, it is his job to protect you. And look what happens when you reverse that role!" James raised his hand all around them to the blackened sky and surroundings. "Look around you Harry. Your mother and I didn't die so that you would have to die long before your time!" Harry ducked his head. Heat rose up from his neck to his face. But he would die before his time...

"I couldn't let him die..." he whispered, his voice choked with unshed tears, "He and Remus are the closest things I have to you and..." He looked up at his father, eyes shining, "He's my godfather! I love him!" Seeing his son's distress James' hard face then softened he then wrapped his arms around Harry, Harry tensed.

"I didn't mean to yell at you, it's just...Your mother and I, no much how we wanted to see you again, didn't want to see you for a very, very long time." Lily reached out and began to rub soothing circles around Harry's back.

"We love you, Harry. We just want you safe." Harry felt the sorrow in his chest lessen with each circle his mother rubbed into his back. Finally he pulled away to see once again James smiling down at him.

Suddenly to their right a growl was heard and a voice whispering something. Lily instantly pulled Harry to her.

"What is—" asked Harry, the hair standing up on the back of his neck.

"Shh..." hushed Lily, looking to her husband. James quickly got to his feet, his wand out. The voices and growling stopped. James lit his wand and raised it above his head.

"Whose there?" There was no answer. James then began to mutter spells under his breath, his wand extended toward the darkness. Lily held Harry very tightly that he could swear bruises were forming. Yet Lily was not paying attention to her son's discomfort in her tight embrace, but listening for the faintest sound her eyes on her husband's wand.

"James? Darling?" she whispered. A sudden wind started blow, it was ominous, dark in nature. Harry could swear it felt like the wind that attacked his friends and himself in the Death Chamber. Lily then reached into her robes and pulled out two wands. Harry stared at the wands in her hand. One of them was Harry's, Lily handed to him. Harry was not pleased about using his left hand, but he would have to.

All of the Potter's wands were aimed at a forming cloud of dark smoke, air, whatever it was. Suddenly there was a boom like a canon. James took a step back toward his family. A ghostly apparition of a man appeared. As it grew solid, Harry realized what it was, a Death Eater.

"A Death—" Harry was once again cut off by his mother. Lily stood up, positioning herself in front of Harry, while James stood in front of his family. Harry could feel his mother's hand shaking. Yet both of their wands were steady on the Death Eater. As former members of the Order of the Phoenix, they were on the poise to fight, especially to save their son. They had done so once before...

Harry too had his wand out, curious at why the Death Eater was here and why he wasn't solid like his parents. Was he a ghost?

"Potters. Don't even think of trying to get your son back to the realm of the living. We out number you. We will not let the Chosen One return to destroy what is rightful the Dark Lords."

"Nothing is Voldemort's!" snapped James, "Nothing but death and destruction!" The hooded Death Eater smiled,

"Do not attempt to—" Lily waved her wand and a white light shot out of the end toward the Death Eater. Though the spell passed through him, he cried out in pain.

"We will do what we see as necessary! We will get Harry back to the world of the living because he belongs there and is needed there. Try and stop us, but we will fight you!" cried Lily, her voice icy cold. "Be gone hateful spirit!" This time both Lily and James shot light at the figure. For a moment, Harry could have sworn he saw the light take shape, as the light hit the Death Eater it was gone in a flash. With a cry of agony the Death Eater vanished. Lily and James' wands did not move from the spot for a long time, and then they lowered.

"We have to move. Now," said James, his face serious, he turned to face Lily, "We need to get Harry out of here and back to the Veil." James raised his wand to the sky cried out, "Accio Veil!" A light shot out of the end of James' wand and flew through the air and landed far south. Winking, like a star in the distance. Harry got to his feet, his wand clenched tightly in his hand.

"We need to go that way and stay close to your father and I. There are dark souls and Death Eaters who will try and stop us." Harry nodded.

"Even though they are dead, there are Death Eaters here who still are in Voldemort's service. They will try and stop you from returning to the world of the living."

"But they are dead," said Harry, confused, "They can't hurt me." James' eyes hardened.

"They certainly can, Harry. The dead cannot kill the dead, but the dead can kill the living. Stick close to your mother and I. We're going to get you out of here as fast as we can. We have to get to the Veil before the Death Eaters amass."

"Light your wand Harry." Suggested Lily, her and James' were already lit. "The Dark spirits here and the Death Eaters detest light

since their souls are so dark. And the glow you give off will lend you some protection too."

"Alright. Lumos." Satisfied, Lily and James took to walking on either side of Harry, wands out.

"We need to head toward that light. That is where the Veil is. The power of Veil sucks its victims in. They can survive here for a few minutes as you know but then kills them. They are sucked so far away that there is no chance of survival. Unless, you are Harry Potter." James ruffled Harry's hair. Harry rolled his eyes. Once again he was the Boy Who Lived.

But for the first time in fifteen years the Potters were together. They were a family as they should have been and always were. Once again, Lily and James were willing and ready to protect their only son, Harry. And for once, Harry was going to let his parents be his parents and protect him. Even if that meant breaking his vow, just a little bit, but Harry didn't mind at all. He was with his mum and dad, and that was all that mattered now.

Chapter 6: The Realm of Veil

Harry held his wand aloft, the tip of his wand lighted. Beside him, holding his hand, more or less, glued to his mother, Lily Potter. On his left was his father, James Potter. The Potters stayed close together their wands lit. Harry noticed with the light, that was not his glowing body, symbolizing he was indeed alive, was that he could now see a path.

"Is this Heaven or Hell?" asked Harry looking around at the blacken sky. James chuckled, Lily frowned at her husband. Harry's head swung between them like a child, trying to capture every expression and movement. He wanted to remember it all. God knows when he'd see them again...sooner or later. Harry swallowed hard at the thought.

"Neither, this is a Realm of the Veil, this is an area of Dark magic. That is why your mother and I have to get you out as soon as possible." Lily's face hardened, Harry blinked. James continued on; his voice cold and monotone, "The Dark spirits that reside here do not like persons of Light coming into their territory, especially to rescue one of its victims. We have only angered the spirits by rescuing you, Harry, and the Death Eaters who rule here."

"Death Eaters who had died in the First War are cunning and cruel to their victims, the ones that will try to stop us are some of Voldemort's most trusted and deadly Death Eaters," Lily then looked down at her son. Harry's face hardened, nodding back at his mother. They would be brutal and unrelenting to get at Harry. To kill him...Wonderful. He did not need to die, well, almost die, three times in one day!

"How do they even know I am here?" asked Harry, "Is there some type of system?" Lily sighed looking to her husband. James winked at Harry.

"Can't tell you that." James' smile then faded, "But they'll try to stop you and kill you because of the Prophecy. That you will be the one to put an end to Voldemort once and for all." Harry stopped, making his arm yank foreword as his mother walked two steps forward.

"Harry?" asked Lily turning to look at him. Raising her gaze and wand to search behind him, there was no one there. His parents had

known about the Prophecy? "Harry?" asked Lily again, her eyes on him, nervous. She looked over at James, did Harry know about the Prophecy, or did Dumbledore keep him in the dark about that too?

"You knew about the Prophecy?" Harry whispered, looking at his father. James then nodded, smiling at the shocked look on his son's face. James crossed his arms over his chest, looking toward his wife. Lily then relaxed, Harry knew, good. It meant they wouldn't have to explain his destiny to him.

"Yes, we knew. When Dumbledore warned us that Voldemort had targeted us, he had to explain why. He told us what the Prophecy contained and that the Longbottoms were also targets." Harry's jaw dropped, he never expected Dumbledore to tell them the full Prophecy while he never told Harry himself the Prophecy until it was too late.

"Dumbledore told us that we matched the Prophecy's description. Your father and I both defied Voldemort by not joining him, fighting against him and escaping the traps he set for us. You, of course, were born at the end of July. Your father and I knew that if you were the child he was after, which he was, we would protect you." Lily reached out and brushed the hair out of Harry's eyes. Her fingers ran over the scar. Mark him as his equal...Harry's heartbeat increased, they knew...they knew. The night Voldemort had come for the Potters, his parents knew why. For years Harry had thought it was just a random killing. Then when he heard his parents were in the Order he thought it was to kill off his enemies, but then....

"Harry," said James, Harry looked up, "We knew that night we had to protect you. Not just as parents, but as parents of the potential savior of the Wizarding world and...we were right." Harry looked at the ground again, wrapping his arm around his middle. He was trying to not let his emotions of sorrow and anger get the better of him. He felt...lied to. Lily then pulled Harry into another hug, his whole body tensed.

"Do not blame yourself. We chose to protect you. You being the Chosen One, had nothing to do with our deaths."

"Yes it is!" exclaimed Harry, pulling away from her, "If I wasn't chosen, I wasn't..." He could never finish; Lily placed a finger over his lips to silence him.

"No. No more, Harry." Harry felt like screaming at them both that because he was chosen by Voldemort as the child of the Prophecy...because he was a half-blood, a match, a threat to Voldemort, they wouldn't have had to die to protect him. Yet a part of him was grateful for his mother silencing him and for that he stayed silent.

A sudden, chilling wind swirled about the Potters causing them to look up. There was nothing Harry could see, but Lily and James' eyes narrowed. Their wands were pointed to the sky, the ends lighting up the sky. They looked at each other and seemed to communicate solely through their eyes.

"Move!" commanded James, grabbing Harry's wrist and pulled him forward. His parents then broke into a run, his father holding his wrist and his mother's hand glued to his, forced Harry to run along with them. James then let go of his wrist, allowing Harry to use his wand again. The light that marked the Veil was getting closer, it was now the size of platter, and Harry could swear he could see the archway.

"What are we running from?" huffed Harry to his mother; she pulled Harry closer to her. Her eyes were on the Veil. Harry then knew, Death Eaters, they must be close.

"Are we close James?" cried Lily, looking over her shoulder. Fear was creeping into her features.

"Not far, almost there. Hang on Harry! Nearly there!" James turned back to look at his son with a wink. Harry felt himself being torn in two. He was happy that they were close to the Veil and he would return to the world of the living, but, he wanted to stay with his parents just a little longer. Harry was soon to find out, his wish would come true.

Piercing screams of agony and torture filled the air as a smoky, almost dark wind swirled around the Potters. Instantly Lily pulled Harry to her again. James then wrapped his arms around the both of them. Even though he was bodily protected by his parents, all Harry could hear was wind and the screams. It was icy cold, so cold with each breath it was like ice in his lungs and he could see his breath.

Harry barely noticed his parents pointing their wands at the smoke, trying to ward it off.

Harry then felt hands pulling at his hair, robes. Lily and James tightened their hold on him. Harry at first tried to ward it off or block it with his hand and arms. The hands kept coming, except it was worse. Harry cried out as he felt physical punches and cuts started to appear on his arms, hands and face. Harry finally pointed his wand at the smoke, trying to get the invisible hands to stop pulling at him.

"Lumos Maxima!" he screamed, the tip of light at the end of his wand brightened. Screams of agony came from the smoke; it pulled away from the Potters and positioned itself in front of the Veil. Harry could now see the Veil, the archway and flickers of Death Chamber beyond it.

Blocking their way, were ten Death Eaters. Some were fully hooded and masked, while others only wore their hoods. Proud, Harry could say, showing they supported Voldemort, even in death. Lily then pulled Harry behind her, wand out. James then blocked both Lily and Harry from sight. Harry felt a sense of déjà vu, of the night his parents died. He had seen the event in a vision given to him by Voldemort, it was happening again. This time, only Harry could die. One Death Eater walked forward, a grim smile on his face.

"Well, well, well isn't this touching? The Potters are all together after fifteen years apart. We warned you to not bring the boy here and now...he will have to pay the price. Shall we keep you together as a family for eternity?" The Death Eater removed his hood and Harry felt his insides turn cold. The man was a man he trusted once, but betrayed Cedric and Harry to Voldemort in one foul swoop. Barty Crouch Jr.

Chapter 7: Death Eaters

"You!" spat Harry, trying to move around his parents to get at him, anger building in his chest. "You're the one that sent Cedric and I to the graveyard! To Voldemort!" Despite his attempts to get around his mother, Lily yanked him back, keeping him behind her. "Mum, let me go!" he growled trying to push her away, but Lily kept him firmly behind her. Barty gave a twisted smile that made Harry's stomach turn.

"Why, you remember me Potter," he then gave a mock bow to Harry, "I am honored. Despite we only met for a little while when I was in my true form. Now," Barty straightened up again, his wand out pointing at the Potters. "This time I will kill you." Harry smirked.

"Yeah but you'll have no praise from your beloved Master! He will believe Bellatrix Lestrange killed me!" Barty's smile faltered. It quickly turned into a sneer.

"It won't matter! I will have killed you and I will know it!" Sparks flew out of the end of his wand. James took a step back, looking to his wife. He had his wand aimed at the Death Eater but had his left arm out in a protective gesture.

"Take Harry, and go, Lily..." he whispered to her, Lily's eyes widened, "They'll kill him if he stays here. I'll hold them off. Take him somewhere else and get him out." Lily took in the number of Death Eaters then gripped James' sleeve.

"No, Jimmy! There's too many of them! Besides this is where Harry has to go back! 'At the point of entry,' they said. Weren't you listening?" James then gave his wife a hard look that silenced her. He was deadly serious.

"Go, now! Lily! Please....like the last time...please..." he begged her, turning his eyes on the approaching Death Eaters. They were walking slowly toward them, wands out, ready to kill the Boy-Who-Lived. Harry felt his breath come in sharply, his heart pounding in his ears as he listened to his parents but his eyes were on the Death Eaters. He felt himself go numb as the memory of October 31st, 1981 spun in his head. His father had said almost the exact same words that he had said on that night. To take Harry and run...A part

of Harry knew his mother should listen but he knew deep down they had to fight. It was the only way to get him home.

"Die Potter! Avada Kedavra!" screamed Barty. A flash of green light erupted from his wand and sped toward the Potters.

"Get down!" screamed James diving to the left while Lily instantly pulled Harry into a tight embrace and pulled him down with her. They dived out of the way just in time, the curse passing inches over Harry and his mother. There was no way to escape now; they would have to fight them. James instantly charged them sending spells flying every direction, rage and excitement dancing in his eyes.

"Stay behind me!" commanded Lily, pulling Harry behind her. Harry wanted to fight. He wanted to fight Barty, the man who had sent Cedric to his death. Yet, his mother would not let him, despite the fact they were glued together. "Protego!" said Lily forming a shield around herself and her son. A barrage of spells banged against the walls of the shield.

"Expelliarmus!" cried Harry, pointing his wand at a masked Death Eater. His wand flew instantly from his hand. He turned to dive for it but was instantly stunned by Harry half a second later.

"Good job," said Lily, with a small smile to her son. Back to back, Lily and Harry fended off three other Death Eaters while James kept Barty and the others busy. Harry was quite amazed at Lily and James' dueling skills. But then again they did belong to the Order of the Phoenix and fought during the First War. Harry watched as James ducked, dodged the curses and spells as easy as child's play. Harry's mind flashed back to when Sirius was dueling Bellatrix and found the two men's mannerisms to be almost the same. Harry's heart then sank at the thought that this was how his father and godfather dueled.

"Come get me you lazy bastards!" James hollered at the Death Eaters, causing them the chase after him. Harry then realized his father was trying to draw them away from Harry and Lily. Father and son's eyes met and all they said was one word, 'Go!' Lily slowly began to tug Harry toward the Veil, yet Harry fought against her. He did not want to leave them alone against ten Death Eaters!

"Come on, Harry!" whispered Lily, pulling him with her. Lily then shot a spell into a Death Eater which sent him flying across the room. Harry found that he was the only one shouting out spells. Everyone else was using wordless magic, Harry still didn't have that quite down yet...As most of the Death Eaters chased after James, Barty understood what was happening and stopped his pursuit of James to face his wife and son.

"No! Stupfey!" screamed James, trying to stun the Death Eater from attacking his family. Barty stopped the spell midway then sent another spell towards James. He found himself surrounded by Death Eaters, unable to move any other direction than to spin around and around, fighting them off. James clenched his teeth in anger. "LILY! HARRY!" he screamed, looking toward them. Lily and Harry were fighting off the Death Eaters, Lily pulling Harry toward the Veil.

James felt sick, absolutely sick. He was once again unable to help his family. Last time, he had been struck down by Voldemort when he tried to take a stand. At least this time he had his wand. The damn rat had betrayed him when he believed Peter would die to protect them. Die as Sirius would have...as Remus would have done. He should have gone with his gut and stayed with Sirius then he and Lily would still be alive.

James blinked angry tears out of his eyes as he watched his son fight off the Death Eaters with his mother. He was so brave...His face so set and determined. Spells came from his wand easily and Harry nine times out of ten found his mark. Three Death Eaters had already fallen under his wand. James smiled, that's my boy! James then slashed a Death Eater full the face with a spell he had learned in fifth year, a dangerous cutting spell. As the Death Eater screamed in agony, James stunned him. Five down, five more to go!

James scream alerted Lily, Barty was upon them, an evil grin on his face. Lily's world once again went silent and numb as it did that October night. James was helplessly away from them, trapped by Death Eaters but back then....dead. Lily swallowed down the pain of that memory. That James, her Jimmy was dead, his face flashing before her eyes as she held her infant son in her arms, dead defending them. And now...James' eyes were full of fear as he tried to fight off the Death Eaters and reach them at the same time.

Barty's wand was aimed just to Lily's left, at Harry. Harry...last time she had him in her arms, last time she could protect his small form last time with her whole body. Blocking him from Voldemort's gaze as she begged for his life. She remembered the fear and panic that built inside her that came alive through her voice and tears. She did not fear for her life, oh no, but Harry's. How could she live with herself if she let Voldemort kill him? She knew it would be her death or Voldemort's, but not Harry's. Last time her sacrifice saved Harry, this time, she had no life to give him. Last time, he had been a one-year-old infant, now he was a fifteen-year old boy, nearly as tall as James...

Barty pointed his wand at Harry, who had no clue, he was about to be killed and cried,

"Avada Kedavra!" Lily had only seconds to act; she grabbed her still fighting son and pressed him hard against her body, holding onto him tightly. He let a few exclamations and cries before he saw the green light speeding toward them. Lily used her free arm to lock Harry's free arm to his side. She then locked her elbow in place to hold her left arm and hand at her side, doing the same for her son's arm. She had to block his entire body with hers. Lily then tensed waiting for the blow.

Harry had kept every sense of his on high alert. As adrenaline rushed through his system he could see things better, hear things better, even smell things better. Yet all of his concentration was on the Death Eaters facing him and his mother. It was only until he heard Barty call out the name of the deadly spell did he realize that he had been targeted once again. Harry swore under his breath as he saw the whirl of green light coming towards him.

"Shit..." he swore under his breath. But before he could move, his mother acted. She grabbed him and held him tight and fast. Harry could have sworn she put him in a full Body Bind. Though he could move, he just couldn't move. He saw the green light getting closer and closer over his mother's shoulder. Heart felt his heart stop for a millisecond, his mother wasn't going to stand there and take the hit? Just like last time, Harry thought. Before he could scream, it hit.

The curse hit Lily fully in the back, the force of it was so great, and it sent them flying. The blackened world spun sickeningly before Harry's eyes before he landed hard on his right side. Harry cried out

as pain sprang up in his shoulder and elbow. The force of the curse and the landing then sent mother and son sliding across the floor before finally stopping. James felt his breath leave him as he watched his wife and son take the blow then land hard on the ground. He pleaded with God that Harry was alright. Lily was already dead and couldn't die again, though he too prayed that she wasn't too badly injured but prayed as he fought again, for Harry's life.

Harry groaned as he opened his eyes, he couldn't see well, both of his glasses lenses were cracked. Pain sprang up in his body as he tried to sit up. Another spell passed inches over Harry's head before he ducked beside his mother again. She was so still....

"Mum? Mum? MUM?" Harry cried shaking his mother, trying to get her to awake. Terror was flooding him, this couldn't....He promised himself no one would die protecting him. He started to hyperventilate, becoming dizzy and dizzy. Through his dizziness he could hear his mother's dying screams,

"Not Harry! Not Harry! Please, kill me instead!" Harry shook the thoughts out of his head as he tried to not cry.

"MUM!" he shouted, his voice choking. Lily then twitched, her eyes slowly opened. Harry felt himself breathe again. Lily gave him a small smile.

"Why are you crying, honey?"

"I thought you were dead..." Harry whispered, biting back his tears. Lily then slowly sat up, groaning and wincing as she touched her back.

"Remember, Harry. The dead cannot die again. We just get hurt badly with the Killing Curse. But the living can die..."

"That's right!" spat a voice. Lily then turned with a wince to face Barty again. Her wand hand was now shaking and so was the hand that was glued to Harry's. She was too weak to fight off Barty again. And he knew this. The Death Eaters around James were less now, but still blocked his path toward his family.

"Leave them alone!" he shouted, shooting a spell at Barty. The Death Eater then blocked the spell with ease, his eyes never leaving Harry. Harry was trapped; he couldn't run away because his mother kept him alive. But if he stayed where he was, he would die! NO! He couldn't die! Not yet! Barty then aimed his wand at Harry's head, right at the scar on his forehead. Lily crawled in front of Harry, blocking him with her body.

"Stand aside, Mrs. Potter..." said Barty cooling, seeing the pain and fear in Lily's eyes. She was too weak to fight him, in blocking the Killing Curse she had injured herself. Lily shook her head, she would refuse to step away from her son when her son needed her time again and time again. She would not see him die! "Very well..." snarled Barty. He then backhanded Lily hard on the side of her head. Though she could not die from the blow, she could faint. Lily felt the blow instantly and began to fall into blackness despite her whole body screaming that she needed to stay awake, she needed to protect Harry. But all the same she fell into blackness, as she did that night, unable to help her son once again.

"MUM!" screamed Harry, he tried to move toward her but found a wand pressed against his forehead. Barty's smile increase ten fold.

"Stupid, Mudblood. Now to your death Mr. Potter." The anger in Harry's chest was rising to a fever pitch. This man had sent Cedric to his death, allowed the Dark Lord to be reborn again and destroy everyone's peace—Harry's peace! He now just struck and insulted his mother! Out of the corner of his eye he saw his father fighting like a bat out of Hell to get to Harry. But in his rush a spell, Sectumsempra, no doubt, hit him full in the chest. Blood began to stain James' shirt and caused him to disappear as the remaining Death Eaters converged on him.

"DAD!" Harry then found Barty's wand at his neck, stopping his words. Barty was leaning in, ready to watch Harry die at his own hand. Harry began to see red as his anger built up inside of him to a fever pitch, exploding the world in red. He hadn't been this angry since...since Sirius died...when Dumbledore died...Then he did the stupidest thing he had done today other than allow himself to be thrown in the Veil, Harry brought all of his weight and energy into his left shoulder, knocking Barty over. Lily Potter awoke just in time to see her son bowl the Death Eater over, with his entire body.

"HARRY!" screamed Lily, fearing for his life. Despite her injured and weakened condition she tried to get to her feet. But found that she was too weak to rise. Barty tumbled backwards crying out in surprise. Harry jumped to his feet, thinking quickly. He needed to fend off Barty before he tried to use the Killing Curse on him again, but how? He then remembered during the initial attack he had used Lumos to get the Death Eaters to stop attacking him. Those with dark souls feared light. But another Lumos at Barty as a form of attack would be laughable. What could generate more light and force the Death Eaters back?

In the back of Harry's tired and frightened mind came an image well ingrained in his memory. The memory of a silver stag that would come to his aid whenever he called it. He called it Prongs in honor of his father's Animagus form, a Patronus...A Patronus! Of course! With enough happy memories to back up the Patronus, he could generate enough light and energy to push the Death Eaters back. Harry blinked, Barty once again was aiming his wand toward Harry, but Harry was faster.

"EXPECTO PATRONUM!" Harry screamed, pointing his wand at Barty's face. He put every happy memory he had behind the spell, forcing all of his darkest memories to the darkest parts of his mind, only allowing the bright to come through. When Harry first found out he was a wizard. That Halloween night that he, Ron and Hermione became friends. His first Quidditch match. Meeting Sirius and finding out he was his godfather. Ginny...His friends...His parents...Out of the tip of his wand shot a silver stag. The stag then charged at Barty, glowing brighter and brighter that it radiated heat it was so bright. Instead of knocking Barty over like it did Dementors it went through him, slowly. As though it was dragging something out of him. What happened next, Harry did not expect.

Barty began to scream, clawing at his chest. Harry blinked several times. He was vaguely reminded of a man burning alive and when Tom Riddle was fading away after he stabbed the diary. He was starting to smolder and smoke, rage filling his eyes. Yet the man had forgotten his wand, he had dropped it on the floor. With a quiet 'Accio' Harry called the wand to his hand. Lily slowly got her feet, as she stood beside her son, staring down at the Death Eater.

"Of course! A Patronus carries love, energy and light inside it! A perfect weapon against those with a dark soul! EXPECTO

PATRONUM" Out of the tip of Lily's wand shot a silver doe. The doe began to charge the Death Eaters that still surrounded her husband, with each passing breath, the light grew stronger. Lily closed her eyes and thought about her strongest memories. Her family...James...Their first date. The day they married. Harry's birth, even fun times with Remus and Sirius while they lasted. Even her childhood memories with Severus and her sister. But James was one step ahead of his wife.

Another stag was already charging the Death Eaters that surrounded him, pulling them down to the floor in agony. The Death Eaters, all ten of them, writhed on the floor in agony. The screams became so deafening that Harry had to cover his ears and close his eyes to shut out the horrible images. He felt Lily wrap her free arm around him until the screams died down. When Harry opened his eyes, all that was left the ten, powerful Death Eaters, were ashes. Ashes that smelled of burnt clothing and hair.

For a moment, none of the Potters said a word. With a smile, James then ran to his wife and son, pulling them into a tight embrace. Harry once again found himself sandwiched between his parents, but didn't care. Instead he wiggled his free arm away to wrap it around his dad's waist, while squeezing his mother's hand tightly.

"I thought I almost lost you both," whispered James into Harry's hair. He looked at his wife and reached out to stroke the bruise forming where Barty hit her. "Are you alright, Lily?" Lily then cupped the hand stroking her face and smiled.

"Yes," Lily then looked down at Harry, "You nearly gave me a heart attack when attacked that Death Eater as you did." Harry felt Lily's finger run over a cut on his face, which made him wince. Lily quickly murmured an apology.

"I had to, or else he would have killed me. And its...revenge you could say. For he was the one that sent Cedric and I into that graveyard, he..." Lily then pulled him into another hug to silence him. Tears and guilt were once again eating away at Harry's soul as he remembered that night in full. If he didn't ask Cedric to take the cup with him...if for once in his life he had been greedy...Cedric wouldn't have. James then reached out and extracted his son's face away from his mother's chest. Tears were streaming down Harry's face.

James cupped Harry's chin and held it firmly, wiping the tears away with his thumb.

"That was noble of you Harry. Brave, but foolish, my son," murmured James, Harry rolled his eyes at James. It was the pot calling the kettle black in Harry's view! Harry pulled away to rub off the remaining tears from his face. James and Lily then leaned over their son to give each other a brief kiss. Harry lowered his eyes blushing deeply. God, he was not used to this! "He didn't hit you too hard did he?" asked James gently to Lily. She shook her head. Harry tried in vain to squeeze his way out from in between his parents but soon found Lily hugging him tightly again.

"What happened to them?" asked Harry, staring down at the piles of ashes as if they would regain form and come back to life.

"When so much, love, light and energy, good energy enters the soul of a dark person it sucks their energy and power away from them," explained Lily, coldly, "With souls full of darkness and hate, they cannot understand nor stand the feeling of love and light. Thus their souls are eaten away at by the light. They are not dead. But they are turned into formless beings for a time. Don't worry, Harry. They'll be too weak to face us again."

"You're safe, and that's what matters. If your mother and I have to take blows for you, we will," said James, making sure he was eye level with his son, "We will protect you, Harry, that's our job." Harry looked up to see Lily nodding. Then a glow of silver caught Harry's attention. Near the Veil stood the three Patronus', they had yet to fade away. The doe was licking Harry's stag gently, in a motherly fashion. Harry then noticed that the second stag, James' stag, was bigger than Harry's nuzzling the younger stag.

"Huh!" chuckled Harry, the Patronus' were as much a family as the Potters were. Harry then held up his hand toward his Patronus and Prongs slowly walked towards its owner.

"Well, I'll be damned," murmured James as Harry reached out and patted his Patronus lightly on the head. "You have a stag as a Patronus, Remus taught you well." Lily and James then called their Patronus' to them.

"Maybe you should turn that stag into a fawn and then we'll really have a deer family," hinted Lily with a wink to Harry. Harry pulled a face, scowling at his mother for making a suggestion such as that. James slipped an arm around Lily's waist clicking his tongue.

"Now, Lils, he's nearly a grown man, not a baby. His Patronus reflects that." Lily looked up towards James and leaned against him, her eyes becoming soft.

"No....his Patronus reflects you, James." James leaned his head against Lily's head. James' hazel eyes sparkled with tears but quickly blinked them away. He reached out and ruffled Harry's hair. Harry then released his Patronus with a soft.

"Good-bye," Harry then turned to face his parents, despite everything he knew. His mother being childhood friends with the Professor who hated Harry and who Harry hated. Who in a very creepy and scary way loved his mother, even after she married his father, even after she died. That even though he hated Harry, he protected Harry until his death. At least in Harry's former timeline.

That his father was bully and spoiled that changed into a brave and loyal man who was killed protecting his family. Despite knowing the creepy, strange, sad and betrayed things he learned about his parents, he loved them. They loved each other and loved him that they died to protect him and still continued to protect him. Yet...Harry sadly turned away and looked to the archway and the fluttering Veil, the way back to the world of the living. He would have to return, he did belong there, even though his parents, his loving parents were here...

Chapter 8: Reality

The depressing mood that came over Harry as he stared at the Veil, felt like a knife to his heart. He knew he belonged in the world of the living. He had a mission to complete for God's sake! And yet...he squeezed his mother's hand tightly. Harry didn't want to leave. Harry turned back to look at his parents. His parents too were looking sadly at Harry and the Veil.

"I have to go back..." Lily nodded, tears forming in her bright emerald eyes. James squeezed Lily tighter to him.

"Alright...come on..." she said softly. Lily then began to walk forward with Harry, toward the Veil. Suddenly Harry's head began to throb and it wasn't his scar. Clapping his free hand onto his head, his wand fell to the ground as his knees buckled.

"Harry!" cried both Lily and James. Both knelt to the floor next to their son, touching his face and shoulders, trying to keep him from falling over. Images and sounds clashed over his mind. "Harry! Honey, speak to us, what is wrong?" Lily kept trying to pull his hand away from his head. The pain was becoming too much, he felt as if his head was going to spilt. He didn't know which was worse, this or Voldemort trying to possess him. Finally, giving into the pain, Harry blackened out. "JAMES!" screamed Lily as Harry collapsed into his mother's arms.

"Harry! Talk to us, please, Harry!" cried James forcing him to lie back against his shoulder, lightly slapping his face. Vaguely Harry could make out the voices, they were screaming out a name. It wasn't just any name, his name. Images morphed over his eyes of faces, faces he knew, Sirius, Remus, his friends, crying out for him. Harry felt his mouth move,

"I see Sirius, Remus...my friends calling out to me...I can hear them..." He felt his father tighten his grip on him. Lily squeezed Harry's hand tightly. Husband and wife's eyes met, they knew what this meant. They were so close; they had to get him out as soon as the vision passed. Even if deep inside they were selfish enough to want to keep him...

"It is your connection to the living world, sweetheart. Because you are still living you are bonded with that world." Harry squeezed his

eyes shut in pain. The throbbing in his temples was growing worse by the minute. Tears leaked out of Harry's eyes as he tried to steel himself against the pain. He then felt a hand caress his cheek, wiping the tears away.

"Let go, sweetheart. See what the images are. It may be able to help you when you return. Let go." Harry then felt himself relax as he allowed the vision to take hold of him and drag him into events that he could not control on the other side of the Veil. The whirls of images and sounds came together.....

When Harry opened his eyes he thought for a moment he was standing in a Pensieve, he could see everything that was going on as if he was there. Like a memory. Yet he could still feel himself laid back against his father's shoulder and his mother's hands, holding onto his. The images were a whirl of colors that slowly came together. He saw a flash of blue-white light; Harry turned his head and saw himself fall through the Veil. Sirius was running toward the Veil, reaching out for him, he never got to him.

"HARRY!" screamed Sirius, Harry held his breath as Sirius stopped inches from the Veil, his eyes wide. Bellatrix then moved away from the Veil, a large smile on her face. Sirius didn't even see her move away. "HARRY!" he screamed at the Veil again. Sirius' face was growing paler by the minute, the light fading from his eyes. His knees then buckled as he fell to the floor, his eyes filling with tears.

Harry moved closer to his godfather, it tore at his heart. Sirius' hands were clenched into tight fists as Sirius stared at the Veil. "Oh God no...no...not Harry..." Tears started to stream down Sirius' face. His eyes pleading, even though he knew. He knew Harry was dead. The Veil was known throughout the Wizarding world as a portal to death. Sirius felt like a failure. He had promised James and Lily he would look after Harry. "I...I..." He stared at the wand in his hand, absolutely useless...

"Harry! HARRY! GET OFF ME NEVILLE!" Harry turned at Ron's voice. His friends were still hidden behind the wall. Harry felt his heart clench. Ron was screaming and kicking as Ginny and Neville held him back. Ron was waving his wand like mad, trying to get at Bellatrix. "BITCH! I'm gonna kill you! How dare you—" Hermione was sobbing, biting on her sleeve to keep her screams down. While

holding Ron back, Neville was very pale, tears falling down his face. Bellatrix Lestrange took away someone else he cared for.

"Ron don't be stupid!" choked Neville, "She'll kill you too and no one will get to revenge Harry! Besides what would your mum say!" Ron shook his head, tears now falling down his face.

"I—don't—give—" Ginny was now sobbing as she wrapped her arms around his torso.

"Please Ron, stop it!" she choked. Ginny sunk to the floor still clutching onto her brother's waist. "Please...Please..." she begged. Hermione then did something Harry had never expected from her for several more years. She threw herself into Ron's arms.

"Please Ron, don't...please..." Ron then stopped struggling when he felt Hermione's arms around his waist. "I can't lose you too..." she sobbed into his shirt, muffling the words. But Ron heard them. He looked down, at the sobbing girl then...he broke...Ron wrapped his arms around Hermione and buried his face into her shoulder.

"I...I won't...I won't...'Mione...Harry can't be..." The rest of the students all breathed a sigh of relief; no one else would have to die. Yet Ginny wouldn't let go. Neville knelt down and pried the red head from her brother.

"It's alright Ginny...please..." Ginny finally go then slumped to the floor, her forehead pressed to the floor.

"Harry just can't be...d-dead...I n-never told him..." Neville then leaned over the girl's bent form and gave her an awkward hug. Luna was the only one who was calm. Her face paler than usual, tears falling down her face talking about some strange creatures in Harry's head that made him do it.

"Harry...Harry..." sobbed Hermione. Harry wanted to reach out and tell them he as alright, he was alive, yet he could not.

"Oh God..." whispered Remus, his face was growing paler than it did during a full moon. He turned to stare at the Veil as though begging for Harry to come out again. Remus bent his head as he clenched his wand tightly. Though Remus' bangs hid his eyes, Harry saw something glitter on his face and fall to the floor, tears. Remus

cared for Harry as much as Sirius did. Harry was more connected to Remus in his original timeline because he was Remus' son's godfather.

"I will save you too, Remus..." whispered Harry as he tried to touch Remus' shoulder, but his hand went through like a ghost. Harry noticed over Remus' shoulder a pale and shaking Wormtail, totally forgotten by Remus. Harry wondered what would happen if you had a life debt to someone and they still killed you anyway. Would it kill you like an Unbreakable Vow? Yet Wormtail didn't burst into flames so Harry guessed not.

Remus slowly walked toward Sirius. When he reached him, put his hands on Sirius' shoulders. Upon feeling Remus' hands on his shoulders, Sirius began to sob openly. His shoulders shook with each sob, Sirius looked up at the Veil again.

"Moony," choked Sirius, pointing at the Veil, "That's the Veil of Death...that means...Harry is..." Remus blinked tears out of his eyes. Now was not the time to mourn the boy, there was still battles to fight. Tonks began to move forward toward her cousin. Both Tonks and Remus grabbed Sirius under his elbows and began to pull a limp Sirius to his feet.

"We still have to fight, Sirius..." whispered Tonks to her cousin, blinking tears out of her eyes. Harry remembered vaguely how he fought against Remus to reach the Veil, not knowing what it was. Yet Sirius must know what it was and was devastated by what it meant for Harry. Bellatrix had backed up away from the Veil; no wands were pointed at her. Most of the Death Eaters had been taken out by Order members. Now the Order members were standing in horror at the death of Harry Potter. Bellatrix began to laugh a high cruel laugh, which turned all eyes on her. Bellatrix threw her head back as she laughed as if all the sadness was a joke to her.

"I killed Harry Potter!" she laughed, her dark eyes glittering, "I KILLED HARRY POTTER!" The hair on the back of Harry's neck stood up as a shiver went down his spine. It was the same taunt that Bellatrix used on Harry after Sirius...Harry began to shake, how dare she...

Sirius whipped his head around at Bellatrix's cry. Sirius then began to shake violently, the bear-like dog could be seen through the tear filled eyes. Harry saw the light in Sirius' eyes go out, a growl came from his clenched teeth. Now, he was fighting against Remus and Tonks' hold on him. Every line in Sirius' body screamed murder.

"You bitch!" screamed Sirius, now violently struggling against Tonks and Remus who were trying their best to hold the man back. "I'm gonna kill you! You killed Harry! LET ME GO, REMUS!" The end of Sirius' wand let out a bang like a gun and a flash of light. Instantly Remus and Tonks let Sirius go as they shielded themselves from the bright light.

Sirius charged Bellatrix, numerous spells flying at her. Bellatrix only smiled at Sirius as she Disapparated just as her cousin reached her. She then Apparated to the top of the stairs that led back to the Ministry. Her fingers ran slowly over her wand. An evil smile came over her face, she laughed again.

"Trying to revenge little Harry? You failed so miserably last time!" A jet of green light shot out of Sirius' wand, Bellatrix sidestepped it quite easily. Sirius slowly walked to the stairs his wand never leaving Bellatrix. As Harry walked closer to his godfather he could see the pure unadulterated hate and rage pouring off of him.

"Oh don't worry I'll get the rat as soon as I am done with you!" spat Sirius, his gaze flickering to Wormtail who was now hiding behind a large stone. Remus drew his wand once again on Wormtail, his face calm all but for the few tears that remained on his face. Wormtail drew his wand again but was clearly frightened and Harry could see why. Though Remus' face was calm his eyes were not, the werewolf was now behind those eyes, not Remus Lupin. Like his fellow Marauder, he was out for blood.

"Finally, got what you wanted eh, Peter? The last Potter is dead..." Remus then began a furious attack on Wormtail. The Death Eater only shot a few spells at his former friend then Disapparated to Bellatrix's side. With a cackle Bellatrix raced up the stairs with Wormtail hot on her heels.

"If you want me Sirius, come and get me!" Both Death Eaters then disappeared around the corridor. Remus and Sirius then chased after them. Harry screamed after them, chasing them up the stairs,

"No! Remus, Sirius! I just saved your life and now you're going to try and get killed again?" Harry pulled at his hair. This was not how it was supposed to happen! He found that when he tried to follow his godfather and his former professor up the stairs he was blocked. Unable to follow them, he watched the scene before him unfold.

"Damn it!" swore Moody, "They'll get themselves killed chasing after them like that! Kingsley, Bones, Roberts! Tie up these Death Eaters and take them to the Aurors. They want proof the Dark Lord is back well there it is." Without a word the Order members began to round up the stunned Death Eaters.

With sad eyes, Tonks turned to the small band of students. They weren't too badly injured, scratches and bruises to say the least. Yet they all had a hollow look in their eyes. They had all just watched their friend die. Tonks clenched her fists tightly. Bellatrix would pay, Harry was only fifteen! Too young to die. Tonks then knelt in front of the students, she spoke softly to them,

"You need to go back to Hogwarts." Off of her own wrist she pulled off one of the numerous silver bracelets she wore, Moody said they were stupid noise makers yet Tonks wore them today and she was glad she did. She tapped the bracelet with a soft, "Portus," The bracelet glowed bright blue she then held it out to the students. "Here, take it!"

Harry felt his heart go out to the clumsy, pink haired girl; she was so gentle with his friends, so understanding. Like so many others she died defending what was right, defending Harry. He would make sure she lived too. If his future godson, Teddy was to be born again, this time he would have both a father and a mother.

With a shaky hand Hermione, still clinging to Ron, reached out and hooked a finger around the bracelet. Then one by one his friends hooked their fingers around the bracelet. Tonks then removed her hand from under it and counted softly. "One, two, three." With a slight pop and a flash of blue light, the five students vanished. Harry breathed a sigh of relief. His friends were out of danger.

On the floor above, a bang rang out. Tonks pulled out her wand again and looked to her mentor.

"Tonks, move it!" screamed Moony. With the Death Eaters secure and Apparated to the Aurors the remaining Order members raced up the steps to the Ministry...

Harry felt dizzy as the images melted together in a whirl of color. The sounds dimmed and with several blinks had found that he was back in his own body again. Lily and James were leaning over him, worry and apprehension in their eyes and faces.

"What did you see?" asked Lily, gently stroking his face.

"My friends, Sirius... their reactions to my death." James frowned as he then looked to the Veil. "Sirius...Remus...they chased after Bellatrix and Wormtail..." Harry then sat up, his head spinning. Harry then forced himself to his feet. "I have to get back before they get themselves killed..." Harry staggered, James and Lily leapt to their feet, helping him keep steady.

"You'll need a few moments to rest. Your vision with the living world takes energy away." Lily kept her free hand under Harry's armpit to steady him. Harry shook his head. Despite the pain of leaving his parents again, he knew he had to get back. James placed his hands on his shoulders.

"Easy, easy...Harry..." Harry finally found that he was steady on his own two feet. Lily handed him his wand, which he placed into the pocket of his robes.

"How long have we been here? A few hours?" Harry asked. He was afraid of being here for a few hours, if Sirius or Remus got killed while he was gone, he didn't know what he'd do...

"No, you've been here..." James pulled out a watch from his robes and examined it, "Fifteen minutes." Harry's jaw dropped fifteen minutes? James' hazel eyes sparkled in amusement at his son's face.

"Time moves slowly here," explained Lily, slowly, "The world of living is much slower than the realm of the dead." Harry felt himself breathe easier, he could still save them...

"I have to get back. Now."

Chapter 9: Good-bye

The archway loomed over the Potters, the Veil swinging lazily back and forth. From what Harry could see on the other side, no one was there. Everyone was upstairs in the main Ministry hall. Lily squeezed his hand very tightly. She knew it was time, once again, to let him go. Harry turned to face his parents, a sad smile upon his face.

"I have to leave. To stop Remus and Sirius from killing themselves...." James gave a small laugh. He started to shake his head. When he raised his head, his eyes had flicks of gold within them that winked in the light of the Veil. Harry couldn't help but smile, he could see the good, old Prongs Remus and Sirius described.

"Never expected Remus to follow Sirius wands blazing into a dangerous situation. He was usually the one who yelled out that we were about to get ourselves killed!" James then shook his head with a small smile.

"What do you mean?" asked Harry, curious about this new insight into the former Marauders. James then ruffled Harry's hair again in an annoyed manner.

"Your father and godfather," said Lily in an imitation annoyed voice, with a hint of a smile about her lips, "Would rush in wands blazing while we were in the Order, into any situation. While Remus...the most level headed of the Marauders would scream at them, while leaving me with a near heart attack, every time. 'James, Sirius, you're gonna get yourselves killed!' But they would never listen..."

James laughed at the exasperated look Lily gave him. But Harry felt himself grow cold, it would take a lot for both of Sirius and Remus to run head long into a dangerous and deadly situation! Seeing the sad look in Harry's eyes, James' settled a hand on his son's shoulder.

"But I guess when Remus watched you 'die' that was it for him. I know he cares for you just as much as Sirius does...All the times they came over and watched you, played with you as an infant. They were your uncles one would say. They love you deeply, Harry," Harry ducked his head to hide the oncoming tears, "For both of them I suppose...losing you is like...like losing your mother and myself all over again." Lily then pulled Harry into a sudden and tight hug.

"Especially re-loosing a part of you James," she murmured looking at her husband with a soft smile, "The three of you were so close..." James sadly nodded.

"It's time Lily, we have to let him go back. I don't want to see Remus or Sirius when we get back." Lily choked on a laugh as she pulled Harry closer. It was then Harry felt tears splatter onto his face that were not his own. He could feel his mother's body shake with each sob.

"We're going to miss you, Harry," Lily pulled away and held her son at arms length. She surveyed him, as though trying to take in the smallest details about him. Harry too found himself hungrily looking into her face, trying to remember every freckle, the way the tears and light glinted in her eyes. He did this before...The Resurrection Stone tight in his sweaty palm as he stared into his mother's face knowing that he would see her again as soon as this was all over... He did get to see her again and...he would see her again soon. Lily then kissed his forehead, right on the lightning bolt scar. "But...we know we have to let you go again. You need to go back."

Harry then felt himself being tugged into another embrace. His hair was being ruffled quite well and Harry realized it was James holding onto him. Harry started to laugh,

"Dad, stop it! Please!" James smiled down at his son as he held him tightly. Harry looked up to see the hazel eyes staring down at him were full of admiration and pride. Harry then wrapped his free hand around his father's arms. He leaned in, closing his eyes. The feeling that he felt deep inside his chest was safety—he was safe with his parents. He barely remembered that, yet being with them now; he felt those memories drift over his mind.

"I used to hold you just like this," murmured James, he felt his father press a kiss on his head, "Yet you were a lot smaller then..." Harry felt tears burn in his eyes; he didn't want to leave them. Seeing her son in pain Lily then pulled both her husband and son into a tight embrace.

"No matter what, Harry, we are always with you..." A sob came from Harry's throat as he tried to remember his mother's words with all his heart. Lily then pulled away and gently caressed his face; she was now eye to eye with him. "Though we don't want to let you go, we

have to. But Harry, I need you to promise me something." Harry then met her eyes and emerald bore into emerald. "That we won't see you..."

"Despite how painfully long it is," murmured James, his arm still wrapped around Harry's torso. Lily nodded blinking tears out of her eyes.

"That we won't see you for a very, very, very long time. Finish school, get married, have children—"

"Name a few after us," interjected James with a wink.

"Watch your children grow, get married and have children of their own. Play with your grandchildren, something your father and I will never get to do...Until you have done all that, don't come see us."

"In short," said James with a smile, "Live a long time, until say, 200 years old? Then you can come see us, not until then." Harry then fell silent, he couldn't tell them he was the seventh Horcrux, he just couldn't...

Despite he knew he should, he couldn't tell them that...his death would be the only way to make Voldemort, their murderer, mortal. To be frank he had at least a year to live maybe even a few months depending on how fast he could destroy the Horcruxes...

Yes, he'd have to lie.

"Alright, I promise," said Harry, plastering a fake smile on his face. Both Lily and James sighed with relief; Harry tried to keep down a rising blush trying to fill his face. Lily then hugged Harry again. Lily then cupped Harry's face so they met eye to eye.

"We have a message for you. Only you know what it means. Now take this message to heart, Harry because it may change your destiny and the destinies of others." Harry slowly nodded, "The message is, 'You can reveal yourself now, or wait...wait for a more opportune moment.'" Harry stood there stunned, mouthing the message over and over again.

He then turned away from his parents to face the Veil. What did the message mean? Reveal himself now or wait? Did it mean the

Prophecy? Nah...the Daily Prophet would pick up on Harry being the Chosen One within a few weeks after his name was cleared. How could reveal himself when...

"Maybe...it means the Horcruxes..." That had to be it! Lily and James could hear their son muttering under his breath about the message but barely caught what he was saying. Harry knew it must mean the Horcruxes! And himself...being dead. "Change your destiny and the destinies of others..." Harry repeated under his breath.

It must mean, Harry thought, that I can reveal that I am alive as soon as I get back or I can wait...Wait and use the cover of death to destroy the Horcruxes. He had already changed Sirius' destiny, why not the others? He could save Dumbledore by destroying the ring Horcrux before he does, prevent a Battle of Hogwarts and save hundreds of lives...With Voldemort thinking him dead, he would never suspect Harry Potter would be hunting his Horcruxes! Though, it may be painful...and dangerous...and stupid but...

Harry turned to look at his parents who were following his every movement. Harry looked down at the hand still glued to Lily's...I have to die anyway, I am a Horcrux, thought Harry sadly, I cannot bear to hide myself under death then appear to have them mourn for me again, which would be ten times more painful...But...He couldn't decide...There were too many factors to this, he would have to see how events played out before him.

"I know, what it means, I'm ready," Lily gave a small nod and together the Potters walked to the edge of the Veil. With a tap of his wand, James unglued Lily and Harry's hands.

"Have your wand ready? There still might be Death Eaters lurking outside the Veil," asked James. Harry reached into his pocket and pulled out his wand. He clenched it tightly in his fist. Lily then kissed Harry good-bye one more time. She loosely held his hand now. Lily and James then positioned themselves on either side of their son. James had a hand on Harry's shoulder and chest, Lily just his chest. They were going to push him back.

"We love you sweetheart, remember that!" Harry blinked tears out of his eyes with a quick nod.

"I know, your love is why I am still alive." James then smiled at his son and nodded toward the Veil.

"Tell Sirius and Remus and...." James sighed rolling his eyes as a grimace appeared on his handsome face, "And tell...Snape...thanks from the both of us." Harry smiled; it would take a lot for James Potter to be thanking Snape, even Harry would admit to that. It took him awhile to fathom the professor who had hated him and he hated back had been protecting him for years because of his unrequited love and childhood friendship for his mother.

"Oh don't worry, I will. I know about that..." said Harry with a slight blush, James blinked and Lily looked stunned. "I'll tell you how I know some time later," said Harry with a smile.

"But not for a long time," murmured Lily. Harry nodded, mentally kicking himself about lying to the parents who time and again risked their lives for him.

"On the count of three. We're going to push you back physically and with magic," said James, his eyes locking with Harry's, "Good luck, we love you." Harry then steeled himself for the trip back to world of the living.

"One...two...THREE!" With a burst of energy and power Harry felt his mother's hand slip from his and felt two pairs of hands push him back. Harry could feel the force and swirl of magic around his body as he flew through the air. He could see James and Lily fading as he passed through the Veil and the archway. He felt his entire body seize, breath was frozen in his lungs and he could no longer see. The Veil swung before him as darkness overtook him he heard his mother's voice cry,

"We love you, Harry! Be safe! And keep out of trouble!" With Lily's last words the world erupted into a bright, white light that blinded Harry. As he tried to scream, his world blacked out...

Chapter 10: Hidden

The Death Chamber in the Department of Mysteries was deathly silent. Only twenty minutes before had it heard the howls, screams and cries as Harry Potter fell through the Veil to his death. The chamber was silent, once again guarding the dead, but not for long....If anyone was standing in the chamber at that time they would see the Veil ripple like water after a water drop hit the surface, then...a body.

The form of a body would be seen coming through the archway as the Veil flapped hard in some unknown wind. As the ripples went faster, one could see the body begin take the shape of a fifteen-year-old boy. Messy black hair, emerald eyes covered by glasses, a scar slashed across his forehead, his robes whipping in the wind. As the body moved through the Veil and made its physical presence known, a bright light streamed from the Veil. Covering the room in white light, like the light of Heaven. Silence...would then take hold over the Death Chamber.

The boy crashed hard onto the floor, not even making a sound. His body rolled away from the Veil until it came to a stop just at the end of the dais that held up the Veil. Upon closer inspection, the boy was very pale, pale as death, dark circles under his eyes. If anyone touched him his skin was ice cold, one would believe instantly the boy was dead. There was no signs of life. A pale face, cold skin and blood...Blood dripping from the boy's nose, mouth, ears and dripping down his face from the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. Then...

Harry's eyes shot open, he couldn't breathe, and his lungs were burning for air. He took a gasping breath trying to suck in huge amounts of air, filling his lungs. His heart pounded painfully against his ribcage, as if it was trying to escape. His heart felt as if someone had left a knife there, throbbing with each beat. He could feel his slow blood circulate through his veins like mud, burning every nerve and muscle in his body.

What Harry didn't know as his entire body writhed in agony, twitching uncontrollably as if under the Cruciatus Curse, his mouth open in a silent scream, his face a vision of agony...He was, in a sense, coming back to life. In the Realm of the Veil, Harry, though alive did not need much oxygen as he did in the living world. One,

because in the Realm of the Veil, oxygen is limited since everyone is...dead. Two, his mother's magical bond with Harry kept him alive and in turn kept his organs running at a slow pace.

So, when his heart beat fast in the Realm of the Veil, it was at a normal rate as if he was in the living world. Now that he was back, his body was jumpstarting itself, causing him pain. With little oxygen, came a slower heartbeat and slower circulation. Thus, Harry was experiencing the pain of life. Yet, Harry would never understand that, only that he was in pain.

Harry writhed on the ground for several minutes before he gained control of his flaying body. Breathing hard and gasping for air, Harry breathed in through his nose and out through his mouth to lower his heart rate. Slowly it worked. Finally his heart rate slowed to a normal rate allowing Harry to breathe easier. Flopping onto his back, he closed his eyes to stop the headache that was now nagging at him. Yet it got worse, building in pain and strength, this was no headache.

"He's very happy," murmured Harry, pressing his fingers to the throbbing scar. Bellatrix must have told Voldemort she had sent Harry through the Veil, to his death. Harry sat up, wiping the dried blood off his nose and scar. Slowly, bit-by-bit Harry got to his feet, his wand, amazingly still clutched in his hand. There was not a sound to be heard, only the muffled bangs and explosions from above him.

"Damn it!" he swore, he had to get up there, now! Yet with each step it was like he had run a marathon. Harry finally made it to the stairs, breathing hard.

"Why is my body like this?" he whispered to himself. He looked up the stairs, he instantly felt his head spin. He was in no condition to fight, nor to climb these stairs. Yet, he had to. So Harry crawled on his hands and knees up the stairs, inch by inch. With each breath Harry got stronger finding it was easier to breathe and his muscles didn't scream under the strain.

Half way up the stairs Harry slipped on something causing his head to bang into the stair before him. Swearing under his breath, seeing stars Harry looked down to see what had tripped him. It wasn't his own feet. At first Harry couldn't see it, but when he reached down he felt silky material under his fingers. Clamping down on the object,

Harry lifted it up. It was an Invisibility Cloak, it was worn and slightly faded, and not like Harry's own that did not show the wears of time. Harry played it through his fingers,

"Moody must have dropped it," The former Auror was known to carry one or two on his person at all times. A loud bang and what sounded like the shattering of stone and glass reached his ears. Harry jumped to his feet, this time it was no longer an effort. He had to get up to the Ministry, but...His mother's message filtered through his brain as the adrenaline shot through his blood.

He could reveal himself to be alive now or wait...wait until he could see where events were going to unfold. Harry's heart screamed for him to run in, showing he was alive, helping Sirius...begging for his forgiveness for then and now. But if he did that...Would the future still be the same as last time? Everyone dying to protect him because of who he was and what he meant? Harry could not bear that.

"No..." said Harry, flinging the cloak over his shoulders. The Cloak was large enough that it covered his entire body, right down to his feet. No one could see him. He clenched the cloth in his left hand with his right hand armed with his wand. Harry then raced up the stairs still out of breath but determined, for now he would remain hidden. If what his mother said was true, he could change the destinies of others...hopefully for the better. What that truly meant and how he would do it, he had no idea.

The flare of lights and colors nearly blinded Harry as he stepped into the Ministry's main hall. Harry stepped behind a pillar, wand ready. It was nearly like déjà vu...nearly. The Fountain of Magical Brethren was already in pieces on the floor, windows and columns around the antechamber shattered. Harry had to be careful where he walked. A jet of blue light shot inches past Harry's left shoulder. Harry then ducked behind the pillar, one good shot, he could be revealed or worse...dead once again. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a sight he knew well from the last time he was here.

Dumbledore, facing off against Voldemort, matched in power and strength. A stalemate. A shiver went down Harry's spine; he could never get over the aura of calm and power coming off of his mentor. In the wand light casted by the spells Voldemort had a smirk across his snake-like face. Harry felt his gut clench as his scar began to

throb. Spells began to crash around the two powerful wizards; with a laugh Voldemort stopped the duel. The pain in Harry's forehead began to build.

"Why fight me, old man? Your savior, the Boy-Who-Lived, is dead! Dead by the hand of my Death Eaters! Surrender, now! And you may be spared!" If Harry didn't look for it he never would have seen it. Dumbledore's blue eyes flashed in some sort of emotion. Harry couldn't tell what it was. Grief? Sorrow? Anger? Rage? Regret? Harry didn't know, Dumbledore's face remained a stone cold, calm. Besides he only saw it for a second.

Whether the headmaster saw Voldemort's words as true or as a taunt, Harry did not know. The two men began to encircle each other again, wands raised. Voldemort then cackled loudly as he charged Dumbledore. Harry raised his wand to help in the shadows before a sharp stab of pain hit the center of his forehead at the scar.

Last time he protected by a headless statue, still in shock over Sirius' death. He remembered the pain was ten times worse the last time, he felt like as though his head was about a spilt open. Yet this time, the pain was only a sharp stab of pain. Though Voldemort was gleeful over Harry's death, yet Harry didn't feel it...Was it because his connection with Voldemort had been severed temporarily while he was in the Veil? Voldemort would have sensed Harry standing there. The smile on his face told him he believed him dead. The throbbing pain told Harry his soul and Voldemort's were still one but the connection between them had weakened. How long it was to last, Harry was uncertain. But for now he was grateful.

By the time the pain had passed the men were fighting again. Harry felt his throat clench shut; he had to help him some how. Yet this time, Dumbledore clearly had a slight upper hand on Voldemort.

"Be weary Tom," he said calmly, sending a large block of stone at Voldemort, which the Dark wizard shattered with a spell, "The Aurors will be here at any minute." Voldemort snorted as a large tongue of flame came out of his wand like a whip, he threw it toward the old mage, who instantly blocked it with a powerful shield.

"Then let them come! My victory over Harry Potter will be sung across the world!" Harry pointed his wand at the man who nearly destroyed Harry's life several times, and mouthed a dark curse

when...A cry then turned Harry's head to the other side of the chamber.

Fighting back to back, just Sirius and Harry had only thirty minutes before, was now Sirius and Remus. Sirius was fighting a smiling and teasing Bellatrix while Remus was close to taking down a terrified Wormtail. The other Order members were facing off against several more Death Eaters who had arrived with Voldemort. Harry was torn on whom he should help, his mentor or his friends. Tonks then tripped over her own robes, it was she who cried out, calling Harry's attention away from the two powerful wizards.

"Ouch..." moaned Tonks, her face then turned pale as she saw the Death Eater's wand inches from her face. Sirius heard his cousin's cry and turned to see her face alive with fear as a wand of a Death Eater pointed right at her.

"Tonks!" screamed Sirius, a moment's lack of concentration caused Sirius to have his face cut by Bellatrix. Sirius then turned back to the witch whom he believed killed his godson, torn between his two cousins. Luckily for Tonks, Harry was there and armed to the teeth. He pointed his wand at the Death Eater, now was not the time to use Disarming or Shield spells, he'd have to go all out. Harry carefully, but quickly aimed his wand so that his spell so that it looked like it came from Sirius's direction.

"Incarcerous," Harry murmured, thick ropes shot out of the end of his wand and latched themselves onto the Death Eater. He cried out in surprise, wobbled then fell over. Tonks then stunned the Death Eater. She then hopped to her feet, smiling in Sirius' direction.

"Thanks, cuz!" Sirius didn't even notice Tonks' call. He was too enwrapped with his fight with Bellatrix. Harry watched as their wands blur with the speed of their spells. Sirius' face was set for revenge. There were no longer tears in his eyes, not a single emotion—only hate. Harry felt the pit of stomach drop. He was afraid Sirius was going to do something stupid in order to get his revenge this time around.

Last time, after the deaths of Harry's parents, Sirius chased after Wormtail, he nearly succeeded in taking him down. Yet Wormtail told an entire street of Muggles it was Sirius who betrayed them, then blasted apart the street, killing thirteen people. Before Sirius

could capture the traitor, he cut off his own finger, changed into a rat and disappeared down the street drain. It was Sirius who was captured and charged for the deaths of Lily and James Potter, in Wormtail's place. No defense, no trial. Sirius spent nearly twelve years in Azkaban for a crime he did not commit.

The whirl of spells dancing around Sirius and Bellatrix almost seemed like a Muggle light show at a concert. Both used wordless magic and Harry could only detect a few spells by their color. Harry watched in horror when Bellatrix did finally send the Killing Curse at Sirius. Harry wondered why she wasn't out to kill him, last time she meant to kill her own cousin and was joyful when she did. The thought of it built a bile in Harry's mouth. Yet the Killing Curse was off by a mile, it was only a tease. Sirius still ducked and rolled away from it. From the floor he shot the Killing Curse right back at her, she easily sidestepped it, it was not even close.

"Aim, Sirius, aim!" whispered Harry under his breath, he could see Sirius' fatigue and anger was causing his usual accurate aim to be off, "You hit Snape with all those spells at fifteen but you can't even aim one Killing Curse at her! My 'murderer!' Come on!"

"Come on Sirius! Are playing games with me or are you really trying to kill me?" she laughed, her mad eyes sparkling. Sirius growled under his breath as a jet of gold light shot from his wand, Bellatrix easily deflected it. "Amatuer!"

"I will kill you!" cried Sirius, getting to his feet slowly, his wand not leaving Bellatrix's torso, "I will kill you for Harry! For all of those you hurt, all those you killed!" he spat. Harry could see something flash in Sirius' eyes when he mentioned his name. It was sorrow, anger and pain. Bellatrix smiled, her wand aimed at Sirius' face.

"I thought I heard you say, you have no reason to live? Now that your beloved, little, godson is dead?" At those words, Harry felt the lump in his throat grow in size, it was hard to swallow. He had to keep his knees locked to stop his knees from buckling under him. Harry remembered that he felt his life had ended briefly when Sirius died. He remembered the wish for death while possessed by Voldemort. He remembered screaming at Dumbledore he didn't wish to feel any emotion or pain; he wanted it all to end. Did Sirius wish for it all to end?

Sirius gave no reaction to Bellatrix's taunt, though Harry knew his godfather well enough to see in his eyes...Yes...it was a possibility Sirius might...

"I will kill you!" Sirius repeated, "NOW!" A jet of green light shot at Bellatrix who had to duck in order to avoid it. Harry then ducked behind his hiding place as the Killing Curse crashed into the column. The column shook with the force of the curse. Harry then scrambled onto his hands and knees to see what was going on. Bellatrix growled at Sirius and began to stream a number of dark curses at Sirius. He ducked and dodged them by inches. Harry knew he had to do something, now.

He aimed his wand at an angle once again to make the curse seem like it came from another direction and whispered, one of the most dangerous curses he knew,

"Sectumsempra!" He couldn't be picky and he knew a disarming spell might give him away as the Death Eaters thought, knew, that the disarming spell was his favorite. He preferred to disarm than kill. The curse grazed Bellatrix's arm and side, yet the cut was still deep. She screamed in agony, sinking to the floor. Harry smiled, the pain and blood loss would keep her preoccupied...for now. Sirius looked around quickly to see who shot the curse that way.

"Thanks, Moony!" screamed Sirius, seeing Remus was facing toward Bellatrix, but still battling Wormtail. Remus didn't even blink. He was too enwrapped with this own duel. Harry could see from his vantage point that Remus was winning. Wormtail, didn't seem to have to fight in him. With Bellatrix distracted, Sirius then turned his wand on Wormtail.

The Death Eater stood petrified between his two former friends, both wands aimed at him. Harry could no longer see his godfather's face; his back was now turned to him. But he could see Remus's face. There was a slight smile there, but his eyes were still frighteningly dark.

"So Peter..." spat Sirius, "You finally did it...What you set out to do fifteen years ago. All of the Potters are now dead, thanks to you. We trusted you to keep them safe and look what you did! You killed James' son, you bastard! YOU KILLED HARRY!" Sirius's form

started to shake in anger. Sirius raised his hand to strike Wormtail, but Remus stayed his hand.

"No..." Sirius then shot him a deadly look, but Remus's calm eyes gave the same message, 'Don't hurt him...yet.' Sirius then pulled away from Remus's grip and kicked Wormtail to the floor. The Death Eater cringed and cowered on the floor, visibly shaking with fear, his eyes moving between both Remus's and Sirius's wands. Both were aimed at his heart.

"I-I d-didn't k-kill H-Harry...B-Bellatrix d-did!" Sirius growled,

"You stunned him! She sent him through! You made sure he couldn't fight back! You killed him too! You—are—culpable! You traitorous rat!" screamed Sirius, Harry could see Sirius was starting to lose his self-control and let grief take over. Just as Harry did in Dumbledore's office. Harry squeezed his eyes shut for a moment he could still hear his screams intermingled with the shattering of objects...

"You are just as guilty in Harry's death as the woman who killed him. You are just as guilty in Lily and James's deaths as the man who murdered them. You knew what you were doing both times, Peter. Both times. I cannot believe that we trusted you with their lives. And now you have sent their son to his death and now..." said Remus calmly, but his eyes flashed in anger. "You will receive your punishment for their deaths," Remus raised his wand. Harry felt like screaming once again, he did not.

"Please don't kill him Remus..." whispered Harry, clenching his wand tightly. They needed Wormtail to stay alive in order to prove Sirius innocent! Sirius smiled thinking Remus was about to kill him. Wormtail then stopped shaking and pointed his wand at Remus's open chest. Harry pointed his wand at Wormtail to disarm him, but Sirius was closer and faster.

"Expelliarmus!" Wormtail's wand flew from his hand, up into an arc, landing far away from him. Sirius then gave out a loud, 'HA!' Cords then shot out of Remus's wand and bound Wormtail up tightly. Remus bent over and picked up the ends, holding them tightly—White knuckle tight. He was not going to let him out of his sight this time. Had that night two years ago, he known Wormtail escaping would mean the revival of Voldemort and Harry's death....he would have killed him right there in the Shack, Harry or no Harry.

"No Harry to protect you this time, bastard! He saves your life and what do you do to repay him? You killed him!" spat Sirius. Remus then aimed his wand at Wormtail's face. The traitor flinched in fear, Sirius turned, Harry could see his face. He was smiling; there was a spark of light in his eyes. Harry felt his chest expand with joy! If Remus could hold onto Wormtail when the Minister and the Aurors arrived, they could see with their own eyes Sirius was an innocent man!

"If you transform, Peter, we will kill you!" said Remus coolly, echoing Sirius's words from that night two years ago in the Shrieking Shack. Sirius nodded firmly. Yet what Sirius didn't see was that Bellatrix was fighting the bleeding and the pain of Harry's curse and was rising to her feet. Her wand was at Sirius's back. Harry opened his mouth to scream a warning, not caring if he revealed himself...

"SIRIUS! YOUR BACK!" screamed Tonks, returning in her mind, the favor. Sirius spun out of the curse's path. Luckily Remus was out of range. He grabbed the traitor by the scruff of his neck and dragged him behind a pillar, keeping him from getting hit. They needed him alive if they were to prove Sirius was innocent. Harry watched as Remus put his wand right between Wormtail's eyes, he said something to him but he was too far away for Harry to hear. Besides he was busy.

He kept an eye on Sirius but from his hiding place but was able to assist other Order members by sending small spells their way to trip up the Death Eaters anyway he could without attracting too much attention. Yet, no one noticed. Everyone was so wrapped up in their battles, trying to take down the enemy and trying not to get killed that no one noticed the helpful spells.

Harry wondered how long they had been fighting since he arrived and how much time had passed since he arrived. The battle seemed to go on longer than Harry remembered from the last time. Harry had no watch and there was not a clock to be seen anywhere about the chamber. Harry's arm was starting to hurt from the amount spells he was sending toward the Death Eaters. He was starting to get tired and weak too. Harry wondered if this was the effects of the Veil taking hold.

Harry slumped to the floor, clutching his wand arm. His breath was coming in faster as if he had ran miles, instead of fighting from behind a column! He gritted his teeth in anger, if he was going to save everyone and change the future for the better, he'd have to be stronger than this. When were the Aurors going to arrive?

As if on cue, there were thirty or so distinct pops of people Apparating into the Ministry. Aurors encircled the entire chamber, wands out, all in their robes and slippers, just like last time. This time Harry was fully awake and not deep in shock and grief to realize the hilarity of the situation. He had to choke on his laugh by stuffing his knuckles into his mouth! The battle then froze. There were no more crashes, screams or jets of light, only a tense silence.

Harry watched as Fudge's eyes went to the size of tea saucers as his eyes landed on Voldemort. His eyes then traveled around the room, looking at the Death Eaters and Order members, wands still at each other's throats. Eventually his eyes landed on Sirius, Harry swallowed down the lump in his throat.

Keep looking, Harry thought, you'll see him! Sure enough, Fudge's eyes landed on Wormtail and his mouth started to move silently. Yet the Aurors moved much quicker than their Minister did. They saw Voldemort; blinked, gasped, and then shot spells his way and the direction of his Death Eaters. The Order members then Disapparated to the corner where Remus was holding Wormtail captive, their wands still directed on the Death Eater they were fighting. The only one that did not move was...Sirius.

"What the hell are you doing Sirius? Get out..." whispered Harry, yet his godfather remained where he was. His eyes darting from between Fudge, Bellatrix and Wormtail. Yet his wand remained pointed at Bellatrix's throat. Sirius was not going anywhere.

Voldemort then smiled, he did not raise his wand to attack Fudge, he only smiled. Harry wondered if he would tell him he was 'dead?' Yet the only word that came out of the Dark wizard's mouth was,

"Retreat! Pleasure to see you...Minister..." he sneered. With loud cracks Voldemort and his Death Eaters Disapparated. Sirius lunged at Bellatrix trying to grab her, but with a smile she said,

"Good-bye Sirius...Enjoy mourning!" With a crack, she was gone. Harry's eyes swiftly went to Wormtail; all of the Order members' wands were pointed at him. He had no choice but to stay. Harry felt like dancing, right there on the spot. Screaming, whooping, he couldn't have asked for a better change! Sirius was alive! Wormtail was captured! Sirius's destiny had changed just as his mother told him, changed for the better! Would he be able to do the same for the others? Harry did not know...but he would try!

"DAMN IT!" screamed Sirius, he threw his wand onto the floor, then fell to his knees, his forehead pressed to the floor. Harry felt his heart clench. Sirius was whispering under his breath and pounding the floor with his fist. Maybe in Harry's mind he had changed his godfather's destiny for the better because he knew of what would have happened, but Sirius didn't think so. Remus handed Wormtail's bonds to Moody, who gladly took them with a sneer and began to walk to his childhood friend.

"Padfoot..." he whispered to Sirius, Sirius looked up, tears streaming down his face.

"Leave...me...alone...Moony..." Sirius choked, wrapping his arms around his torso in pain, trying to hold in his grief. "Please...leave me alone..." Remus stopped only inches from Sirius. Pain flickered across his face. He was in mourning for Harry too, only his emotions were not there yet, he wouldn't let them show until everyone was safe. With a soft sigh Remus placed a hand on Sirius's shoulder, in comfort. Sirius pulled his shoulder away, his sobs filling the air. Remus, unsure of what to do next then placed his hand on Sirius's head and looked toward the Minister and Dumbledore. Tonks too came over to try and support her cousin, but refused her comfort too.

Harry's heart was now screaming for him to take off the cloak and run to Sirius, telling him he was alive and alright. Each sob was like a knife to the heart. Yet, something kept Harry in the dark of the column, hidden under the Invisibility Cloak. He didn't know what, but he stayed there, dead to the world.

"He's...back...He's back!" whispered Fudge, still staring at the spot where Voldemort had just disappeared from. Fudge frantically searched Dumbledore's face as if trying to see if what he just saw was all a lie.

"Now...do you believe?" asked Dumbledore calmly. Fudge took his bowler hat in his hands and played with it. He nodded, looking at the floor. Harry thought he looked like a child who was being scolded. "Good, now Minister there are things which must be done as I requested last year..." said Dumbledore coolly.

"Oh...oh yes!" sputtered Fudge, "Everyone must know. Bane!" he called to one of the Aurors. "Go to the Daily Prophet, tell them what has happened! Make it today's headline...yes!" The Auror then Disapparated to do the Minister's bidding. A loud sob from Sirius then called Fudge's eyes on Sirius, he did a double take.

"It's Sirius Black! Capture him!" he ordered, Remus and Tonks then took protective stances in front of Sirius, wands out. Dumbledore then raised a hand before anyone else moved. The old mage shook his head.

"Cannot you see for yourself Minister that Peter Pettigrew has been captured by my Order?" Fudge then looked over toward the group around Wormtail. Fudge's jaw dropped upon seeing Wormtail again and stared at him, clearly, for a much longer time.

"But...Black killed him! You lie!" sputtered Fudge, looking between Dumbledore and the man he believed to be dead for fifteen years. Dumbledore shook his head, a bite of impatience in his voice.

"No, Pettigrew is alive, as I stated to you two years ago. He is an illegal Animagus, the form of a rat. The Potters chose Peter as their secret keeper as a decoy to Sirius. It was Pettigrew who betrayed the Potters that fateful night, not Sirius Black. He has been a Death Eater for more than fifteen years, check his arm...A Dark Mark is there..." Fudge just kept looking between Sirius, still on the floor and Wormtail. Harry watched as Fudge's eyes began to dim. He was starting to believe...

"When things are settled here, I will give you fifteen minutes of my time Minister to deal with the issues at hand." Dumbledore said coldly. That aura of power was still radiating off of the old headmaster in waves. Harry vaguely remembered Dumbledore telling Fudge that the last time too. The two men then walked off away from everyone else to speak privately. Harry was dying to know what they were saying now he was in a better state to understand what was going on.

Harry's eyes then turned to the Order members around Wormtail. He was now struggling to get away. Fear was in his watery eyes. Harry smiled, good, he should be afraid, after sending to Sirius to Azkaban for his crime, he should be! Harry wondered that if or when the news got out he was dead, if he decided to stay dead, would Wormtail be charged with Harry's murder too? Probably, Sirius and Remus would make sure of that! Would he get the Kiss for killing off an entire family? Maybe, yes, he should...Harry had no qualms about that!

Moody then yanked on Wormtail's ropes, probably making them tighter, Wormtail winced. He stopped struggling.

"Shut up, traitor!" spat Moody. Several Aurors, seeing Wormtail, murmured and openly pointed at him. They all exchanged looks of shock, horror or disbelief. At least six of them made their way over to the Order members guarding Wormtail. Harry watched as they all stared at him for several minutes then looked at one another and over as a still sobbing Sirius. He instantly watched it click in their heads...

"Minister! This is Peter Pettigrew! He's alive!" Fudge turned away from the private conversation he and Dumbledore were having to look at Wormtail as the Aurors dragged the frightened man to him. Moody still kept his grip on the ropes and his wand at Wormtail's head as the Aurors, wands out, dragged him to the Minister

"His finger is gone! Look!"

"Dumbledore was right! Sirius Black is innocent!" Wormtail was now shaking from head to toe badly. Sirius stopped crying to look at Wormtail's shaking form. For a few moments he remained silent. But as he heard the Aurors speak in his defense, he smiled. Revenge for Lily and James had come at last. Even Remus gave a sad smile.

"There is a Dark Mark on his arm look!" Kingsley had joined them, rolling up the left sleeve of Wormtail's robes. There, on his arm was the Dark Mark. A tattoo of a skull and snake, black as night on Wormtail's pale arm. The symbol of Voldemort's followers. Fudge's eyes widened as he examined the tattoo. His face then morphed into the face of the Minister of Magic once again.

"Take him to Azkaban. Question him under Veritaserum, no wait...I will question him myself. I need to hear the truth for myself! In the mean time, Black will have to come with us." Fudge's eyes landed on Sirius's bent form. He frowned at Sirius when he looked up from the floor at Fudge. Though he had stopped crying, for now, tears were still dripping down his face. Fudge probably thought Sirius was weeping for joy that the real man who betrayed Lily and James Potter was caught, not over Harry's death.

"Sirius is no longer guilty of a crime," said Remus coolly, yet his eyes flashed in anger. No one was taking Padfoot back to Azkaban, now that they had the real traitor. No, they'd have to go through him...and Tonks.

"He escaped from Azka—"

"Sirius has already served twelve years of his life in that wretched place, Cornelius, he does not need to go back. Seeing as how the real traitor and the man he 'killed' is in your hands," said Dumbledore, his eyes landing on Sirius. Harry could see relief spread across Sirius's face and the faces of the Order members. Yet Remus and Tonks did not step aside. Dumbledore's blue eyes seemed to flash for a moment, sadness. "He does need to be sent back...Not now..."

Harry at that moment knew—Dumbledore knew or believed he was dead. Fudge then gave a small nod of agreement, waving off the Aurors. Sirius then gave Dumbledore a small nod of thanks.

"You might also want to question the Death Eaters tied up in the Aurors Office," said Kingsley coolly with a slight bow to the Minister before mingling in once again with the Order. Fudge then started to order his Aurors on different missions. Dumbledore then walked over to Moody, his face though calm, had a look a dread. He leaned over and whispered something into Moody's ear. With a curt nod, Moody softly said,

"Yes, the boy is dead. Bellatrix sent him through the Veil..." Harry then watched his mentor's face, age within seconds. He looked older than Harry had ever seen him before...Not in his office after Sirius died...Not on the top of the Astronomy Tower...Though Dumbledore kept a calm face, Harry could see the grief and sorrow

in his eyes. Everyone's eyes or faces looked to the floor, in sorrow. Yet luckily Fudge never heard anything, nor did the Aurors.

With a curt nod, Fudge then gestured for the Aurors holding Wormtail to follow them. With Moody in the lead they led Wormtail toward a fireplace. With a flash of Floo powder and the shout of 'Azkaban!' Fudge, Moody, Wormtail and the Aurors vanished in a flash of green flame. The other Aurors then Disapparated to complete tasks that Fudge gave them. Harry began to dance on the spot. Wormtail was finally going to jail! Sirius was free and...Harry looked up from where Sirius was sitting...

Sirius was gone...Where was Sirius?

Harry realized that Sirius was no longer where he had last seen him, kneeling on the floor. Everyone was lost in their grief with the knowledge that Dumbledore now knew the horrible truth that Harry Potter was dead. Sirius had vanished and no one knew. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw movement. When he turned his head, he saw him...Sirius.

Sirius was moving slowly, but that was not what made Harry's heart jump and his breath stop. It was in the direction he was going, back to the Death Chamber. Moving quickly and quietly as he could he followed his godfather down the corridor and to the staircase. Harry was in absolute panic. Sirius was so distraught and grief stricken that he was going to throw himself into the Veil.

"Oh, God...No Sirius...no..." whispered Harry, he started to pull at his hair, what should he do? Sirius was about to kill himself! How was he to warn them? Harry then kicked a rock. He looked at it. No one realized that Sirius was about to end his life...over Harry!

Harry picked up the stone; he had a choice once again to make. He stood at the crossroads again seeing two different directions as he did when he came out of the Veil. If he revealed himself to Sirius and stopped him. Harry winced at that. Sirius's state of mind was...off. He saw Harry he would do one of three things in Harry's mind. One, faint, wake up then hug him to death. Two, Sirius would think he's gone mad or seeing Harry's ghost and...go mad. Or three, he'd curse him, thinking he was a Death Eater trying to trick him. Harry's other option was to throw the stone. He was very tempted to

reveal himself as he watched Sirius's slow march down the stairs. Yet once again something kept him from doing it and he knew why.

There were other lives that needed to be saved, not just Sirius's in the near future and the Horcruxes, the Horcruxes had always been Harry's destiny, his mission, his purpose. That he knew.

"No...not yet, other lives are at stake..." What he didn't realize at that moment he made his decision. A decision he thought he decided later. Harry threw the stone as hard as he could at the ground just at the entrance way to the Death Chamber. The stone gave off a loud crack, pieces tumbling over the floor. Everyone turned at the noise.

"What was that?" asked a witch from the Order whom Harry never saw before. A wizard beside her shrugged his shoulders.

"Probably a piece of stone breaking off. We did cause a lot of damage. Are we going to have to pay for it?"

"Nah..." responded the witch with a small smile, "The Death Eaters will." It was then Remus looked behind him, Sirius was gone. His head then shot up in the direction of the noise. It came from the Death Chamber...and Sirius was...

"Where's Sirius?" cried Tonks, realizing her cousin wasn't there. She began to spin on the spot, dancing on her tiptoes in fear. Harry watched Remus's golden-brown eyes widened in horror as he realized what was happening.

"Oh, no...SIRUS NO!" screamed Remus, he then bolted after Sirius, Tonks on his heels.

"Remus what is it?" cried Tonks, Dumbledore turned swiftly at Remus's scream.

"Sirius is going to kill himself!" cried Remus back as he leapt through the doorway. Remus missed running into Harry by inches. But Harry nearly risked getting bold over by the pink-haired witch. But luckily he remained in the small alcove at the top of the stairs. He watched as Remus nearly tackled Sirius. He was nearly at the Veil. Sirius blindly began to fight him off kicking and flaying. Harry wondered if Sirius had gone mad...

At the top of the stairs appeared Dumbledore, his eyes sad as he watched Remus and Tonks struggle with Sirius. Remus was able to put Sirius into a full Nelson and held him tight. Tonks aimed her wand at Sirius with tears in her eyes at her cousin.

"I'm sorry..." she whispered then stunned Sirius. He froze, Remus then loosened his grip.

"What you trying to do Sirius?" cried Remus, one could hear the tears in his voice. His eyes glistened with tears. "Are you trying to kill yourself?" Sirius stood motionless in Remus's arms. Harry could see he was fighting against the spell and finally did so. Harry was quite surprised he knew it took awhile to fight against it, not mere minutes.

"Let me go! Remus...please..." sobbed Sirus, Remus tightened his grip. Instead of stunning him again, Tonks helped hold him.

"We're not going to let you kill yourself! Harry wouldn't want you to hurt yourself, over this. It's not your fault!" cried Tonks, holding onto Sirius tightly. Sirius lowered his head, his bangs covering his eyes. He then began to laugh. He threw his head back and laughed almost mad like.

"Kill myself? Kill myself?" he cried, tears began fall down his face, "Why would I kill myself? I still need to revenge Harry! I just want to be here for a little...This is where he died...this is where..." Sirius then slumped in Remus' arms as he let grief take over in racking sobs.

Harry could understand Sirius' grief. Harry remembered how he wanted his life to end when Sirius died. How he had begged for death...How he had let his grief take hold of him in Dumbledore's office. Screaming that he didn't not want to be human anymore. How he wanted everything to end. Everything to end...

"Maybe you should take Sirius back to Hogwarts, Remus," suggested Dumbledore gently, he stood inches away from Harry that if Harry wanted to, he could tap his arm. Yet he didn't. Remus silently nodded in agreement. Together Remus and Tonks supported Sirius's limp form and Disapparated.

Harry sighed, Sirius was safe, and hopefully Remus would watch over him. Harry then followed Dumbledore out to the main Ministry chamber. The other Order members were still waiting for him. They all looked sad, some of witches had handkerchiefs to their eyes.

"Kingsley, I'd like a word. The rest of you, you may go home. Thank you for today." Most of them nodded sadly. Some would whisper condolences to Dumbledore, gently patting his shoulder. Others just sobbed. They all Disapparated with many pops, leaving Dumbledore, Kingsley and a still invisible Harry, alone.

"I need you Kingsley to go to the Burrow and find, Arthur and Molly. Bring them to Hogwarts, tell them something has happened. Bring them to my office, I will tell them what has happened myself..." Dumbledore sighed; Harry looked at his mentor and felt sad for him. He looked like he was on the verge of tears. "Harry was like a seventh son to them. Severus and Minvera will be there too, they need to know Harry is...dead...too." Dumbledore could barely bring himself to say that Harry was dead. He loved that boy like he was his own son, his death was on his hands and he knew it.

"I understand," said Kingsley softly.

"Do not have them talk to their children before hand. I need to tell them. Now...I'm off to see the Minister. I will meet all of you in my office in fifteen minutes." With a bow Kingsley turned and Disapparated. The crack echoing around the shattered Ministry.

Dumbledore bowed his head, this as going to be one of the hardest tasks he ever did. With a wave of his wand, two silver streaks, message Patronus shot from his wand. Harry crept closer to his mentor as he pocketed his wand. Harry slapped a hand over his mouth to quiet his gasp. Two silver tears fell down Dumbledore's face into his beard.

"I am...truly sorry...Harry..." The old man then looked toward the ceiling as if trying to peer through the veil of Heaven, "I have failed you..." With a resounding crack, Dumbledore was gone...Leaving Harry alone in the cold, shattered and dark Ministry....

"I'm sorry too..." Harry whispered to the silence.

Chapter 11: The Choice

Harry stood in the dark Ministry, his breath coming in sharp and icy in his lungs. He was alone...His knees were shaking, what had he done? Was this the right path he was taking? He didn't know. Was it better to be dead to the world and destroy Voldemort or to be alive to the world and destroy him? The last time proved tough and bitter when the world knew he was alive. Would it be easier dead? He just didn't know...

His head was spinning, his friends were in a state of shock and mourning, they believed him dead. That's what he wanted, right? Harry felt cold and cruel inside, how could he do this? To let them believe he was dead? Images then flashed over his eyes. Sirius falling through the Veil...Ron, Hermione, Luna, Neville, Ginny...all his friends injured and nearly killed time and time again because of him. A flash of green light, Dumbledore falling off the Tower...The bodies in the Great Hall...Remus, Fred, Tonks...Even Snape laying dead on the ground, covered in his own blood...His parents' last words as they defended him...They all died defending him and what was right.

Yet how...how...could he...? Shivering in the silent Ministry, Harry knew that he had to get back to Hogwarts. He would have to make his decision soon, he was at a crossroads and he could not stay there for much longer. Lives depended on his decision. Yet he felt so...guilty. The guilt and fear were welling his chest like cold ice.

Harry pocketed his wand as he pulled the Cloak tighter to him. How would he get back to Hogwarts? The easiest way was to Apparate to Hogsmede then walk to Hogwarts...But he was no longer seventeen, as was his age in his original timeline. He had been pushed back two years in time and two years in age, he could tell. In his sixth year he gained another two-four inches in height...So he was once again...fifteen.

"Damn," Harry swore, "I forgot, I'm fifteen again!" Harry stomped his foot in anger. Last time he was able to move place to place easily by Apparating. Now that he was fifteen again, physically, he was still under the Tracer, which tracked all under aged magic. Harry wondered if the Ministry considered him dead...which they were bound to learn in a few days depending how long Dumbledore kept it quiet, would the Tracer be taken off?

Right now, that did not matter. Harry gathered the Cloak around himself, as he paced the floor. If he couldn't Apparate then he better use Floo powder. In the main entrance hall were about ten or so fireplaces that witches and wizards could use them to get to and from home, work and other business. With a small crackle of flame left in the fire it was not enough to get him back to Hogwarts light. With a swish of his wand the fire roared to life.

Harry then stepped into the fireplace; the flames didn't even lick at his clothes. Not even a singe. Harry then grabbed a large handful of Floo powder. He knew that he needed a fireplace where no one would see him come out. Harry then began to think back two years to his original timeline, what was he doing before he came to the Ministry?

Then a pink-puffy toad like face made Harry cringe. Umbridge, she had taken Hermione and himself in the Forbidden Forest. They said they would lead her to Dumbledore's secret weapon, but really they took her to see Hagrid's half brother instead! She had met her fate with centaurs after making them angry. She would not appear back up at the castle until the next afternoon. Her office was free.

"Hogwarts! Umbridge's office!" shouted Harry and he threw down the powder into the flames. With a flash of green flames Harry felt himself being pulled upward, faster and faster. Soot and ash filled his nose and mouth. Harry squeezed his eyes shut tightly, he didn't want to see. Then with a spray of flame and a hiss, Harry fell forward.

Ash and soot sprayed all over the puffy, pink office. A place Harry never believed in his whole life he would be happy to see. The pictures of kittens and cats all meowed loudly or hissed at Harry their fur on end. Harry coughed the soot out of his mouth. As he righted himself he tapped both the Cloak and himself with a cleaning spell. The cat pictures all hissed at him at which Harry glared at them and said, "Shut up!"

Flinging the Cloak over his shoulders, Harry exited the sickening pink office. The halls of Hogwarts were unnaturally quiet, not even the ghosts floated about, as they were to do at night. The clock tower rang in the distance; it was one in the morning. The eeriness of it all made Harry shiver. Was it like this the last time and he was

so deep in grief he hadn't noticed? Or was it because he had changed the course of time?

Harry had explored Hogwarts under an Invisibility Cloak many a time before yet Harry felt strange. He didn't know if it was the guilt getting to him but he felt as if he should take the Cloak off and just stand like a statue in the hall until someone found him...Could he do this? Destroy the Horcruxes alone? Last time it had been hard even with two extra pairs of hands. Would be easy now that he knew where they were and how to destroy them? He didn't know...he didn't know...

At the end of the hall, the doors to the Great Hall were cracked open and a golden light shone through. Curious, Harry walked toward it. The Great Hall should be empty...Yet...Harry heard the distinct sound of sobs coming from in the Great Hall. Harry felt himself beginning to shake as he walked to the door. As he looked around the door he could see his friends sitting at the Gryffindor table, they sat sobbing or in silence. All being examined by a solemn Madame Pomfrey one by one, they must have told her what had happened.

Harry felt himself muse for a moment that he was behind his godfather and Dumbledore on the get go but he was here first. The doors were open wide enough that Harry could scrunch his body together and quietly enter the Hall. Harry then tiptoed to the far right side corner of the Hall. The sobs echoed around the Hall softly. Harry felt his heart clench as he remembered the last time he was here.

Bodies...littered the floor along with the wounded. The Weasleys all gathered around Fred's body trying to console each other. Hermione in Ron's arms...Bill and Fleur clutching each other...George sitting at his twin's head in shock as Percy tried to comfort him. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley slumped over their son's body...Tonks and Remus laying side by side as if in sleep. Students...some too young to have even been fighting in the first place....It sickened Harry to his core, they all died to protect the future, the good...Harry...How many wands came out against Pansy in his defense....?

Yet this time it was only five friends, mourning a friend they thought long dead. Harry looked at each of them taking them in, almost comparing it to that night that seemed, years ago not hours...

Hermione still had her arms wrapped around Ron as he now had his arms around her. The bushy haired girl could not stop crying, despite the handkerchief in her clenched hand and Ron's hand making small circles around her mid back. Hermione sobbed into Ron's shoulder, not even pulling away so the school nurse could examine her.

"Come on, 'Mione," said Ron gently, wiping his own tears off his face, "Harry won't want to see you to deny medical care over him..." Hermione's tears doubled at Harry's name. Harry bit his lip to keep himself from calling out to her to stop her tears. He had to remember the last time they had been through the Department of Mysteries, she had got hurt badly. So badly that it left scars. They all did. Ron and Madame Pomfrey had to physically hold her up for her injuries to be examined. Neville sat in silence as tears ran down his face, his wand still clutched in his hand. He was very pale and shaking. Ginny and Luna were still crying, Ginny the hardest, whispering things under her breath. While Luna was still, staring into space as if it could help take away the pain.

"I'm gonna kill her," whispered Neville breaking the silence. He began to shake harder. "For my parents...for H-Harry." Ginny's tears increased which called Luna away from her other world to comfort Ginny.

"Don't be a prat Neville," muttered Ron as Madame Pomfrey healed the cut on his arm, "Let the Order take care of her, we've done enough damage. Besides, we don't need anyone else to..." Ron couldn't even say the word. He tried but only ended with him leaning his head on Hermione's shoulder, sobbing.

Harry closed his eyes, he felt sick. He couldn't take this; despite he knew that he was trying to protect them and others. Harry stepped outside into the Hall, breathing hard. He leaned against the wall. He felt hot, cool air then brushed past his face as he heard footsteps. Harry looked up to see Kingsley leading Mr. and Mrs. Weasley into the Hall. Surprisingly the twins were following them, well...this was off...Harry felt his gut spasm in pain. Dumbledore was going to tell them...he...

"What is this about, Kingsley? I heard the children were in trouble?" asked Mr. Weasley, his eyes resting for a moment on the Great Hall. Molly pushed past her husband.

"Are they alright? Were they hurt?" her voice was demanding but worried at the same time. Harry knew she wasn't worried just for her own children, but Harry as well. Something passed quickly over Kingsley's eyes before they cleared.

"Dumbledore will speak to you first before you see your children." Molly crossed her arms in anger and kept looking to the Great Hall.

"I'll bet they're in BIG trouble, Fred," whispered George; there was a glint of mischief between the twins. Harry watched Fred with a throb in his heart. He died before his eyes, like so many others...Harry was going to save him. None of the Weasleys would die. Mrs. Weasley then waved off both the twins.

"Oh, you two. Go into the Great Hall with the others! We will be there shortly!" Fred and George opened their mouths in protest but a death glare from Mrs. Weasley pushed the twins with a mock bow from the twins into the Great Hall. Harry then followed the small group around the castle until they reached the familiar statue that marked the Headmaster's office.

With each step and worried question from the Weasleys' Harry felt his soul grow heavier. Guilt was like lead in his soul but he knew he had to save them all. They all deserved it. He was to die anyway...It terrified him at the thought of being given a second chance to save them all and fail...

Waiting for them was Professors McGonagall and Snape. Harry was not surprised that Dumbledore had called them to tell them about his death. McGonagall was his Head of House and an Order member. Snape well...as an Order member he needed to know and to know he failed in protecting the son of Lily Evans, his childhood friend and the woman he loved until his dying breath. The small group acknowledged each other with an odd look from Snape.

"Chocolate Frogs," said McGonagall. The griffin statue jumped aside to let the small party inside. Harry clutched the Cloak tighter to himself as he followed them up the stairs. He was careful not to make a sound as he followed Snape upstairs.

Kingsley pushed the door open to the spacious office of the Hogwarts Headmaster. Lining every space on the wall were magical

portraits of all former Headmasters and Headmistresses of Hogwarts. They were all buzzing with the news that the Magical World now knew the truth at last. Standing behind his desk, his hands behind his back, his face grave...was Dumbledore. Harry retreated to the far corner of the office by the Pensieve. He wondered if his thundering heartbeat would give him away. With a bow in Dumbledore's direction, Kingsley departed.

Harry clenched the Cloak closer; Dumbledore had a knack for knowing if Harry was under his Cloak when others did not. Harry wondered if his headmaster would sense him, he was even hoping...

"Headmaster?" asked Snape coldly, crossing his arms. Clearly upset that he had been dragged here for some reason. Dumbledore turned to face them, his face was calm but one could see the sorrow. It was so apparent that McGonagall gasped and Snape and Arthur looked unnerved. That caused the questions to downpour, mostly from Mrs. Weasley.

"What happened?"

"Are the children alright?"

"What is this about Death Eaters?"

Dumbledore silently raised his hand. All fell silent. Mrs. Weasley was out of breath and looked confused and furious at the same time that Dumbledore was not answering her questions at once.

"Take a seat," With a swish of his wand, he summoned chairs for the Weasleys. The couple sat down, now clutching each other's hands in fear. The professors all remained standing. The portraits' chatter died down to low whispers to hear what was going to come next. Gossiping was all they ever did.

"I will...try and make this quick and...painless as possible. Tonight Death Eaters infiltrated the Department of Mysteries." Arthur gripped his wife's hand tightly, his face turning pale. Molly's hand flew to her mouth.

"Did they get it? Did they?" asked Molly under her breath. Dumbledore shook his head, the entire room relaxed.

"The Death Eaters were not successful to get the Prophecy because...Because Harry led his friends to stop them." Molly turned white and looked faint and angry at the same time. Harry gave a small smile. She would not be mad for much longer. "He had a vision that Sirius was in trouble and relayed the message to Severus in code because they were with Umbridge. Where that woman has disappeared to, I don't know."

Snape snorted. "Just like Potter, willing to rush into situations. Black was safe." Molly turned to look at Snape sharply. Something passed between them and Snape lowered his eyes first. Harry smiled; Mrs. Weasley had just scolded Snape in her own personal way.

"Was he informed?" Dumbledore moved around his desk, to pace the open floor. McGonagall's sharp eyes watching the headmaster, but then she turned to look at Snape.

"No. By the time Severus got the news, they had gone. Luckily the Order was informed and chased after them." Molly breathed again, her handkerchief clutched white knuckle tight in her hands. "They were holding off a group of Death Eaters quite well by the time they arrived..." Dumbledore turned to look at the group, though there was a small smile on his face, the normal glint in his eyes vanished. McGonagall smiled.

"Dumbledore's Army must have taught them at thing or two." Though she was not one for having her students breaking the rules, the D.A. stood up to that bitch Umbridge and did her justice. She was quite proud of all of them, Gryffindor or not.

"Then why have you call us here, Albus? If the students are alright—" " She was cut off by the dull look in the headmaster's eyes. Something was wrong. Arthur saw it too.

"Someone was hurt?" Molly and McGonagall then froze both praying that none of the students had been injured. Molly looked close to tears. Harry squeezed his eyes shut as he shut out the sight since he could not shut out the sound from his ears. Here it comes.

The room was silent. No one said a word. Dumbledore did not confirm that someone was hurt, nor did he tell them Harry was dead. Did he loose his nerve? Or was he still so shocked and grief stricken

that he lost the words to tell them? Snape's black eyes examined Dumbledore's face; it was Harry's most hated teacher who saw the truth. He only he saw it. His eyes narrowed with a flash of light.

"Someone is dead? That it isn't it?" he said coolly. Dumbledore nodded. Molly muffled a scream while McGonagall's hat fell off as she looked at Dumbledore sharply. "Who is it? Lupin? Black? Tonks? Roberts? Tins?..." Snape began to roll off the Order members in a list. For a moment Harry felt sick, how could he do that? Name names so calmly? When Snape had finished naming everyone but for a few he knew to be alive did the room grow deadly silent.

"Then...who? A-a student?" stuttered McGonagall. Dumbledore's eyes now held no light whatsoever and the calm face he wore was starting to wear off.

"I am afraid so..." Molly then began keening sobs into her husband's shoulder who now stared at Dumbledore as if he just met him. McGonagall now had a hand on a chair to steady herself. Her face was growing paler by the second. The only time Harry saw her do that was few and far in between but he remembered she was very pale after Dumbledore died.

"Is it—is it?" asked Arthur at last, looking toward Dumbledore. The headmaster shook his head.

"No, none of your children were hurt..." he said quietly, Molly looked up at Dumbledore to see the truth and found it. She gave a small smile but it did not alleviate her tears. McGonagall gripped the chair tighter.

"Then who...?" Once again Snape saw the answer in Dumbledore's eyes, he had been around the man long enough to know that death did not affect the old man easily. But the emotions were right on his face...it had to be...

"It's Potter...isn't it? He's the one who is dead." Molly, Arthur and McGonagall all looked at Dumbledore. Harry opened his eyes; he could see they all were not breathing. Dumbledore looked at all of them, the sadness clearly on his face now.

"Yes, Harry is dead..." Whatever he was to say next, was never heard. It was cut off by a scream from Molly. Her tears doubled as she wobbled in her chair. Her husband had to stand and hold onto her to keep her from falling off. Molly sobbed into her husband's torso. Arthur had a few tears fall down his face in horror. Harry's heart went out to them. Harry knew that the Weasleys loved Harry as if he was one of their own. His death would shatter them as if he was their own son...That he knew...

"How did it happen?" asked McGonagall as she took a handkerchief from her sleeve and dabbed her eyes. "How-how did P-Potter die...?" Harry never imagined a teacher crying over him, never, not once. There was not a single emotion on Snape's face but Harry could see the anger in his eyes. He was probably blaming Harry for his failure to protect him. That's what the man did, even when he had a secret duty to protect the boy. Oh no, don't blame the people who killed him, blame the dead boy himself! Yeah, his mother must really be thanking him now...Harry rolled his eyes.

The Weasleys' cries were the loudest throughout the room as Dumbledore explained how Harry had died. McGonagall broke down into full-blown sobs by the end. Sobbing into her handkerchief, trying to muffle her unprofessional sobs. What Harry didn't know is that McGonagall did not have many favorites, but Harry was one of the rare few. Ever since she watched Dumbledore place the infant Harry Potter onto the doorstep of Number 4 Privet Drive, he held a special place in her heart. Now, he was gone forever. Snape pounded his fist against the wall in anger.

"The stupid boy! Always rushing in to be the hero. Never takes time to stop and think. The idiot! Just like—" What happened next Harry could not believe nor imagine in a million years. Molly pushed away from her husband forcefully, walked up to Snape and slapped him. The contact crashed and echoed around the silent room. The portraits who were silent for the entire conversation now starting buzzing. Some started to whisper loudly and point. Clicking their tongues, shaking their heads or laughing as a few did.

Snape and Molly's eyes met. Molly's brown eyes burned with grief and anger. Snape reached up to touch the red mark on his cheek stunned. No words were spoken, but the message was clear. 'Don't blame Harry for this. Not now. Do not destroy our memories of him!' Slowly Molly went back to her chair, her husband staring at her in

shock. Snape didn't say a word, he only lowered his eyes, he didn't know that was to be the first piece of violence invoked against him tonight. Harry felt his jaw drop and at that moment he wanted to hug Mrs. Weasley, though he did not move.

"That was unnecessary, Molly," said Dumbledore coolly to her. Her eyes snapped up at him and gave off the same message. McGonagall had by then stopped sobbing and resumed her professional manner.

"What is to be done? Has the Ministry been informed? His family?" she asked, trying to keep her own grief out of her voice. Arthur's face hardened; he had seen that Harry's Muggle family never gave a damn for the boy. First time he met the boy he was very skinny and it took Molly weeks to get him to a normal weight. Though Harry never said anything, Molly and Arthur believed Harry at times had physical and emotional abuse at the Muggles' hands as well. When Molly first hugged the boy he was straight as a board. He probably was never hugged by an adult since his parents died.

"They don't give a damn about him," said Arthur coldly, Molly nodded, "They'll probably have a party or something than mourn the boy." Harry agreed on that one. Dumbledore sighed.

"They must be informed since legally they are his guardians." Molly frowned Sirius was looking more and more like the proper guardian for Harry by the minute. The guardian Harry should have had...Molly choked and started to cry softly again.

"The school?" asked McGonagall softly, "Though there is...no body...Will there be a funeral?" Dumbledore raised a hand. The lines on his face were starting to show more now.

"Everyone will be informed in due time," McGonagall's face hardened. She did not think that keeping Harry's death a secret was not a good idea. The boy would be missed in the morning. Especially if the Death Eaters know there is no reason to hide it. "A funeral...well I will discuss it with Sirius. He has more of a right than anyone..." Harry could hear portraits whispering loudly.

"Albus, I thinking keeping Harry's death a secret is—" said McGonagall coldly but then Dumbledore raised a hand.

"Tomorrows headline will be that Voldemort has returned. I don't want to send the entire Wizarding world into a panic with the added headline of Harry's death. We'll wait to have it publicly known. But the Ministry and the students will be informed in the morning." Dumbledore then looked up at the portraits. "I wish for these revelations to be kept secret and inside this castle until I say so. Is that understood?" The portraits all responded with 'Yes...' 'Yes, Headmaster,' 'Understood,' or groans. Harry rolled his eyes all these portraits ever did was gossip!

"May we see our children now?" asked Arthur slowly to Dumbledore, he looked numb. With a nod from the Headmaster, the group then silently walked to the door. His legs shaking Harry followed once again behind Snape. The only sound that could be heard as they walked to the Great Hall was their footsteps and Mrs. Weasley's sobs. Harry felt numb and terribly guilty, yet he had to...he had to save them. The Great Hall loomed ahead of them; Harry could still hear the girls crying.

Mrs. Weasley cried out when saw her children. Fred and George were sitting on the bench across from Ron. They were both pale and staring at Ron as if he was speaking another language. Ron must have told them Harry was dead. Well, Harry thought as he took his position in the corner, at least Fred's not dead. Mrs. Weasley ran to Ron and Ginny and scooped them up into a tight hug. Ginny instantly began to cry louder as her mother held her. George stood up and looked to his father as his mother and siblings cried.

"Is it true Dad...? Harry is...?" Arthur sadly nodded his head. George then plopped back down beside Fred and buried his face into his hands.

"He gave us the money to start the joke shop. He..." Fred said quietly, staring at his own hands. The doors to the Great Hall swung open. In walked Sirius, Tonks and Remus. Remus and Tonks...still dragging Sirius. By now his godfather looked like a ghost. Remus and Tonks dragged him to the bench beside Ron. After a quick look over by the nurse, he had no injuries but was in shock. Harry watched as Sirius slumped onto the bench, his body being taken over by racking sobs that shook his entire frame.

Molly pulled away from her children to look at Sirius. There was deep pity in her eyes, how had she nagged at Sirius time and time

again when he said he was Harry's only family? That he wanted the boy to stay with him over the summer. To tell Harry the truth...Molly moved over toward the fallen man and reached out to touch his shoulder. Sirius jerked and sat up at the touch. Neither said a word, but then Molly broke down into sobs first, wrapping Sirius in a strangle hold of a hug.

"I'm so sorry Sirius...I should have never..." Sirius did not return her embrace, only shocked at it. When Molly pulled away Sirius stood up, his arms around his torso as if trying to keep the pain in.

"I should have stopped him...I should have made sure he was safe...I should have hexed the bitch where she stood...I have..." Sirius then collapsed to the floor, tears streaming down his face as his body shook with his pain. Harry shut his eyes and bit his lip until it bled. Remember, you have to remain like this...The choice has been made, Harry thought, You have to save them all and destroy the Horcruxes it is the only way!

Remus then ran to his friend, kneeling down beside him, shaking Sirius' shoulders.

"I should have held onto him...Sirius please...stop this..." Harry opened his eyes despite his head told him not to. Tears were streaming down Remus' face, the pain and grief was visible now.

"It's—not..." said Sirius in a muffled voice, "He was never...your...responsibility—" sobbed Sirius. An angry look came over Remus' face as he shook Sirius harder, finally Sirius looked up. Remus seized his face on both sides and held him so they looked eye to eye.

"He was my responsibility too....James and Lily expected all of us to look after Harry. All—of—us!" Remus gestured to everyone around the room, "You are not to blame...please...stop this..." Sirius looked around the room, his eyes sweeping over everyone. He knew Remus was right, yet he was Harry's guardian it was his job...

"I can't...he's gone...I...I," Remus then pulled his friend into a hug. At first Sirius fought against it, not willing to be babied. Yet he quickly gave up and sobbed into Remus' shoulder.

"I loved Harry just as much as you did, Padfoot," said Remus gently, a small smile came across his face, "I feel guilty that I got to spend more time with him than you did..."

"I was supposed to protect him..."

"We all were..." said Arthur sadly, now holding a sobbing Ginny in his lap as if she were a five year old and not a fourteen year old girl.

"You don't...I just want..." Sirius then moved for something in his pocket, but Remus stayed his hand.

"Let me go..." growled Sirius. Instead Remus yanked Sirius' hand away from his pocket and he drew out two objects: a pocketknife and his wand. Harry felt his breath stop again. The whole room went dead silent. Remus then held the objects in his hand for a brief moment, and then they vanished into thin air. Harry sighed, Remus was making sure Sirius didn't hurt himself. His godfather looked furious.

"You will get them back when I think you are in a better state of mind, Sirius," Remus coldly said, standing up, pulling Sirius with him to his feet. Exhausted Remus slumped onto a bench and put his face into his hands. Harry could see his body shaking with sobs. Remus finally was allowing his grief to take hold. Seeing Remus in distress, Tonks came to his side and put an arm around his shoulders and rested her head against his shoulder. Harry watched as she rubbed his back in soothing motions and spoke to him quietly. Though Harry may change destiny and time, but at some point time does not change relationships. Harry smiled; maybe Teddy would be born after all...

Sirius then stood there, staring at the floor. His eyes then found Harry's friends sitting together except for the Weasleys, who were all in a big huddle, trying to comfort one another as best they could. He then stared at the Gryffindor table, as if he could see Harry there. Laughing with his friends, not knowing he was going to die.

"I...I remember when I first met him...Remus...The day after he was born...The day..." Sirius bowed his head as tears filled his eyes again. He then looked up and a soft look came over his face. "I remember..." Harry pulled out his wand and pointed it at Sirius. Though Harry had mastered Occlumency during his trek with Ron

and Hermione to shield his mind from Voldemort from trying to read his thoughts and memories to find him, or worse possess him.

Even now Harry was doing it to hide from Voldemort the fact he was alive. (Harry didn't know how long the severance from Voldemort's mind would last, so he used Occlumency to keep him from finding out Harry was alive) But Legilimency...Harry had never tried to enter someone's mind before. It was always Snape doing it to him. But he needed to see what Sirius was thinking. Yet...the only problem was that he could reveal he was alive in the process, but he had to try.

"Legilimens..." Instantly Harry's world blurred but he could still feel his body. Slowly the images came together as if there was a movie in Harry's head....He was in Sirius' mind...And Sirius made no sign that he knew someone was invading his mind. He was too lost in his own memories of Harry and his grief to notice...The memories were clear, not blurs...

Harry at Christmas time, smiling and laughing with his friends despite the upset of Mr. Weasley being in St. Mungos. Their talk in the room with the Black family tree. Seeing him off at Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ as a dog, Harry's smile and laugh as Sirius chased his tail. That night after the Third Task as he sat on Harry's bed and talked to him. The light in Harry's eyes when he offered him a real home when he was free...As if that mattered anymore...The first time he saw him in twelve years, looking just like James with Lily's green eyes staring at him in shock...

That first time...the first time he saw those eyes...

It was a sunny August the 1st of the year 1980 as Sirius Black walked through St. Mungos hospital, a piece of paper clutched in his hand. The pretty medi-witch at the front desk flirted with Sirius endlessly when he asked for the room number of Mrs. Potter. Walking down corridors and hallways he checked each number on the doorway. Today Sirius was dressed in a semi-formal fashion, its not everyday you met your best friend's new kid!

He finally stopped at the correct room: Room 345 with a labeled sign that read, 'POTTER.' Sirius stuffed the piece of paper into his robe pocket, straightened his collar then knocked twice.

"Come in!" called a muffled female voice from the other side of the door. Sirius smiled as he entered the room. Sitting up on her bed sat Lily, she looked tired but she was glowing. A bright spark twinkled in her green eyes as she smiled at Sirius.

"Sirius, you made it!" she said with a smile. James was sitting in a plush chair next to the bed, he looked like he had not slept in two days, but the spark in his hazel eyes was brighter than Sirius had ever seen. James stood up and walked to Sirius, hugging him.

"Hello, Padfoot. You're the first to make it. Good." James pulled away as a grin spread across his face, ear to ear. Sirius then walked up to Lily and planted a kiss on her cheek.

"How are you feeling Lily?" Lily chuckled as she settled into the near mountain of pillows behind her. Sirius knew James was behind that.

"Tired...Happy, but tired." Sirius pulled out his wand and conjured a bouquet of lilies for her. He then presented them with a flourish and a bow,

"For you, Mrs. Potter," he said formally, Lily giggled.

"That is the sixth I got today!" She pointed to a table on the other side of the room littered with balloons that flashed different colors and changed from, 'Congratulations!' to 'It's a boy!' There were quite a number of flower arrangements but lilies dominated them with pink roses. Sirius frowned, maybe he should have been more...creative. But James scooped the flowers from Sirius' hands, conjured a vase and placed the flowers on Lily's bedside table.

"But these, Padfoot, will get a place of honor." Sirius then settled into the chair beside Lily's bed as James sat on the bed next to his wife.

"So...anyone else come to see you?"

"Just Frank and Alice," said James jabbing his finger to right, "They are just down the hall. Their son...Neville was born on July 30th. When we came in Alice had already given birth. They came to see us in the early stages and brought their son..." Lily smiled,

"He is such a sweet boy, when he was here, he helped James keep his nerve and kept my mind off the pain. You should go see them later, Sirius," Sirius made a mental note to do that, then snorted, James loosing his nerve? Over something like...childbirth, please! James could rush headlong into packs of Death Eaters but he could fear his wife going into labor? James rolled his eyes at him.

"You try sitting still when your wife is in pain, giving birth!" spat James, a blush rising to his face.

"The nurse nearly gave him a Calming Potion but he was able to pull through," Lily's eyes glowed as she took James' hand and held it, "Never slept and stayed by my side until the end..." Sirius smiled, mentally he wondered how much more of this mushy stuff he could take and he thought their wedding day was bad.

"Well Dumbledore said he'd be by this afternoon. Remus promised as soon as he was off duty he would come," said James with a shrug. The adults continued to talk about the Order until Lily sighed,

"Can we please not talk about the war or the Order, please? Not today..." Suddenly there was a tiny squeak from the left of Lily's bedside. It then turned into a full out wail. It was then Sirius noticed the white bassinet; it nearly blended in with the white walls.

Lily's face instantly changed, it turned soft and her eyes glowed. She leaned over toward the bassinet cooing,

"It's alright, sweetie, Mommy's coming...Ouch." Lily then put her hand on her abdomen, wincing in pain. James instantly jumped up and gently pushed Lily back against the pillows.

"I'll get him, the Healer told you not to push yourself," With a small nod, Lily settled back. James then walked to the other side of the bed and reached into the bassinet and pulled out a small cloth bundle that was moving. Sirius could see tiny fists waving around as the baby cried. James then held the baby and quietly talked to him, bouncing him slightly,

"Shhh...I'm so sorry you are feeling ignored...Shh...its alright, Daddy's here," He continued on like that for only a few minutes then, the baby calmed down. Sirius' jaw dropped, James was a natural! Lily was beaming at her husband. With a smile James turned to look

at Sirius, "Sirius Black, may I introduce you to the newest member of the Potter family..." James walked over to Sirius, his face positively aglow with happiness.

Sirius then leaned over to look down through the cotton blankets to see a tiny face, fast asleep with a tuft of black hair sticking out. Sirius held his breath, "Harry James Potter..." Sirius then smiled at the boy's name.

"Harry? Who came up with that one?" James smiled as he sat down on the bed, shifting Harry slightly in his arms.

"We both agreed on it, but I came up with that one..."

"And James?" asked Sirius expecting his best friend to be guilty of naming his own son after him, but Lily smiled widely.

"That would be me," Sirius then turned to look at Lily in shock, "It flowed very well. All of the other names we liked never worked." She shrugged then laughed at the still shocked expression on his face. Slowly Sirius smiled at her.

"It does flow...Very well..." He then turned back to look at the baby in James' arms. He waggled a finger over the baby's chin, the baby did not even move. James then smiled up at Sirius.

"Would you like to hold him?" Sirius instantly sprang away in fear. He began to shake his head like mad, waving his hands.

"No...no, no, no, I can't hold him...Prongs...seriously...I might drop him...I," James frowned at him.

"Seriously, Sirius?" he said sternly, "It's not that hard, just be gentle." Sirius looked to Lily for back up. Surely she wouldn't Sirius to hold her newborn son! For God's sake he rode a flying motorcycle, flirted endlessly, drank...no way...But Lily was too frowning at him.

"Come on Padfoot, please? We want him to meet his uncle!" Sirius sighed running his fingers through his hair, no way out.

"Alright," he then landed in the chair next to Lily's bed. James stood up and walked over to Sirius. With shaking arms Sirius held them out for the child. With James and Lily telling how to hold the child.

Make sure that his head is in the crook of your arm, keep your other hand and arm under his back and bum...Was the instructions given to him.

The tiny baby settled easily into his arms. He hardly even moved when he was transferred from James to Sirius. With that settled James sat on the bed again. He placed a hand on Lily's thigh which she reached out and grasped his hand. Sirius just sat there, with this tiny infant in his arms, then he smiled.

"Hi, Harry. I'm Sirius, or Padfoot if you'd prefer..." Lily smiled, "I'm gonna be one of your uncles." James smiled; this was the moment he had been waiting for.

"Not just an uncle," James said quietly, Sirius caught his words and looked up, surprised.

"What?" he asked, confused at James' words, "What do you mean, 'Not just an uncle?' Huh?" James grinned as Lily squeezed his hand hard. Sirius saw James' eyes flash. James then looked down to his son in Sirius' arms. James reached out and stroked Harry's face.

"Lily and I agreed on this, first and foremost, Sirius. We know that you will do anything to protect those whom you love. That is why...we have decided to name you Harry's godfather..." James' eyes met Sirius', he was serious about this. James smiled. Sirius then looked away from his best friend to little Harry.

Had Prongs gone mad? And Lily too? He was no role model...Remus...was, not him.

"Why not Remus?" asked Sirius. Lily's eyes softened. Poor Remus, because he of his 'little furry problem' he missed out on so much. James and Lily had considered making all of the Marauders Harry's godfathers, but...Peter was irresponsible, barely able to keep track of himself. Of course Remus would down right refuse because of his condition, Lily knew he'd rather prefer to be a sideline uncle. That left Sirius...though he was not the role model type...the Potters knew Sirius would protect Harry with his life.

"Because we know that you will protect Harry, always. Remus' problem...Well..." Sirius winced. Remus hated being a werewolf.

Sirius would bet he'd do anything...well, not anything, but something if he could to rid himself of his curse.

"The point is, Padfoot, we know that you will do everything in your power to love and protect Harry. Becoming his godfather means that if anything should happen to either Lily or myself—" Sirius made a noise that cut James off.

"Don't say it!" James shrugged, Lily frowned at her husband, this was serious! Sirius frowned at him.

"It is a possibility in these times, Sirius. That as his godfather you are to become his guardian; you are the first one in our Will to take care of him," James then looked Sirius in the eye, his face serious now, no more jokes. "Sirius Black, do you accept the responsibility of being the godfather of Harry James Potter?"

Sirius dropped his eyes from James' hazel ones to stare at the baby in his arms. Could he be responsible for a child? In that instant Harry opened his eyes. Sirius gasped, they were a bright green. Lily's eyes. Upon seeing the new person holding him that was not his mother or father, Harry, surprisingly, did not cry. Instead his green eyes sparkled, he giggled and he reached for Sirius. James laughed.

"Look whose awake? Are you saying hello to Uncle Sirius, Harry?" said Lily gently, her eyes on her son.

"Lily...he has your eyes..." said Sirius, his own eyes never leaving Harry's.

"We know," said Lily quietly, "The Healer was quite surprised when he saw them. Like Muggle babies, an infant's eye color doesn't show up for several more months. He said that it was a lucky sign when a baby's eye color shows up at birth."

"Did you...?" Lily shook her head. Her eyes were dark for several months before they became their natural green. Sirius stared at Harry. The baby smiled up at him. How could he say no? After everything James did for him? Being his friend even though he had a horrible family with a terrible past. Taking him in when he ran away when he was sixteen? No, he could not say no. Not to James, not to Lily...not even to Harry. He needed him.

With tears bottling in his eyes he looked up at Lily and James with a wide grin across his face. This was one of the happiest days of his life.

"Yes...I accept. I accept...everything..."Lily and James smiled, James nodded to Sirius in thanks. Sirius then looked down at Harry, he was still staring at him.

"Meet you godfather, Harry," said Lily quietly, tears falling down her face. Sirius smiled down at Harry and placed a kiss on his forehead.

"Harry James Potter...my godson..."

With a steady pull, Harry retracted himself from Sirius' mind. Harry's vision was blurred. He had to blink several times to clear his eyes and it was not because of the Legilimens, he was crying...

"Sirius..." Harry whispered, he let the tears fall. Harry now knew how strong Sirius' love was for him. For his family...The pain in Harry's chest built...Guilty as charged...

Sirius had tears streaming down his face and he was shaking. He finally looked up and around the room. For the first time all night, he saw Dumbledore. Harry watched as the sorrow left his face in a flash to be replaced by anger and rage.

Oh...no...

Sirius stayed where he was but the instant everyone saw the deadly look on his face did the weeping and the tears stop.

"You..." growled Sirius, sounding like the bear-like dog he turned into, Remus' head shot up, "You bastard!" screamed Sirius at Dumbledore. Harry winced. Dumbledore kept calm, he didn't even move. Hearing the tone in his friend's voice, Remus jumped to his feet and placed himself between Dumbledore and Sirius.

"Sirius...calm down...It's not his fault—" Sirius began to advance toward Dumbledore, Harry was very glad his godfather was unarmed.

"You lied to him! You lied to me! You told me he would be safe! That he was learning how to stop the visions, the possessions! We

should have told him EVERYTHING!" Remus now was physically blocking Sirius from attacking the headmaster with the help of Mr. Weasley.

"Stop it Sirius!"

"Calm down!" Hermione was now starting to make those noises she did whenever she saw danger or trouble drawing near. Mrs. Weasley protectively stood in front of the children. Tonks had her wand out, though; she looked fearful of using it. Sirius was now physically trying to fight off Remus and Mr. Weasley, trying to push his way around them.

"WE SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM EVERYTHING! WHAT WE WERE GUARDING, WHY WE WERE GUARDING IT! WHERE IT WAS! HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN—He...He..." Sirius was breathing hard, still fighting hard, "IT'S—ALL—YOUR—FAULT!" Sirius screamed. Dumbledore at that moment looked like he had been hit by a physical blow...Harry winced again.

He was vaguely reminded of his own stunt in Dumbledore's office. Screaming and shattering things trying to wrangle with his grief. Trying to come to terms with his grief as he screamed and screamed and screamed trying to drown out Dumbledore's words.

Snape then stepped in front of Dumbledore,

"It is not the Headmaster's fault that the boy ran without any thought to the Department! That he was so infatuated with the idea of saving your bloody neck that he drags his fellow students down with him! His death is his own fault—" Whatever Snape was going to say next, he never did. Incredibly, Sirius had managed to take Remus' wand from him, aim at Snape with lightning speed and hexed him. Snape flew back several feet and slammed into the wall. The girls screamed as Remus wrestled with Sirius for his wand.

Snape looked pale as a single cut marred his face, dripping blood. Remus had managed to take his wand from Sirius and with a crack, bound him up. The room grew deadly silent but for Sirius and Remus's heavy breathing. Strike two, Harry thought; looking at Snape, He could never pass up the opportunity to disgrace Harry...Even when he was 'dead.'

"I'm sorry...Sirius...but..." huffed Remus as Sirius dropped to his knees struggling with his bonds. Sirius never heard a word; he glared at Snape with such venom...Harry swallowed hard.

"Don't—you—dare...Blame Harry for this!" cried Sirius, watching Snape's every move like a hawk watching its prey, "You've always hated Harry! Just because he was James' son..." Snape stood up, wiping the blood off his face.

"Don't then..." continued Snape coldly but was cut off by a cold look from Dumbledore.

"Enough..." he said coldly and the room fell silent. The tension was so thick one could cut it with a knife. Remus knelt down beside Sirius to keep him down. Dumbledore then turned to the grieving godfather and spread his hands out in a gesture of peace.

"You are right, Sirius," said Dumbledore softly, the grief and sorrow now was in voice as well as on his face. Everyone turned to look at him in shock, even McGonagall looked shocked that Dumbledore would admit he was guilty in Harry's death.

"Albus, what—" asked McGonagall quietly, Dumbledore raised a hand to silence her.

"You are right, Sirius...I am responsible for Harry's death. You are right, I foolish enough to think that Harry would be happier, safer if he did not know about the Prophecy." Dumbledore then paced the floor as everyone watched him. Sirius remained still and quiet, unlike what his godson had done in his original timeline.

"He believed he was alone!" spat Sirius, "That he had no one to turn to. I was out of reach and you were distant. And despite the fact you ordered Snivellus here to train him in Occlumency, he quit on him!" Dumbledore then turned to look at Snape sharply. Questions flashed between them, but Dumbledore did not publicly ask why he had stopped teaching Harry. A slight flush came across Snape's shallow face. Dumbledore must have read his thoughts on why he stopped. Dumbledore frowned then sighed, turning back to Sirius.

"Right again. I kept my distance from him hoping that Voldemort would not see the close relationship Harry and I had...I feared had he known that...he might try and possess the boy. I should have

taught him Occlumency...If I had taught Harry myself...he would have never gone to the Department of Mysteries tonight..."

Harry watched from a distance as a few tears fell down Dumbledore's face, Harry felt his chest seize, he really did blame himself! Harry remembered he did blame Dumbledore for quite sometime after Sirius' death for everything...Clenching his hands into tight fists he could no longer stand it; he had to get out of here!

Quickly and quietly he exited the Great Hall, luckily calling no attention to himself. Once he was far enough from the Great Hall, he ran for it. He could hear a heart wrenching cry echoing from the Hall, but ignored it as tears streamed down his face. This was the only way...

He kept running without any notice of where his feet were taking him until he reached the Gryffindor Tower. The Fat Lady was sleeping away in her portrait. Harry wonder why he brought himself here...All he was going to do was make himself hurt again and...Then it hit him.

He had items in his dormitory that he would need for his Horcrux hunt and he did not want to wear this shabby Cloak anymore! Harry then paced the floor as he thought back two years to the password to gain entrance into the Gryffindor common room.

"Pollywoddle..." Harry hissed. Without even waking up, the portrait hole swung open and Harry climbed inside the Gryffindor Common room. He hadn't been in here in over a year. It brought back a whirl of memories that left Harry standing dizzily on the hearth. Shaking his head, to knock out the painful memories, Harry quietly ascended the spiral staircase.

Harry entered the door labeled, '5th Year Boys', it was quiet but for the occasional snore from Dean or Seamus. Three beds were empty; one would not be filled for the rest of the year...For the rest of...Harry bit his lip as he walked over to his trunk.

He swapped his original Invisibility Cloak for Moody's it would seem odd that it was gone from the trunk. Harry then dug through for his backpack, stuffing in as many clean clothes he could manage to get away with. He also packed the book Remus and Sirius gave him for Christmas that year, it could come in handy if he had to face off

against Death Eaters. After packing a few more things Harry picked up his Firebolt that he kept with his things. He weighed it in his hands.

He would need it. Until the Tracer came off, he need not use magic that will alert the Ministry or the Death Eaters he was still alive. But people would know something was amiss if Harry's broom went missing. So Harry found a small twig that he transfigured quite well into a mirror image of his broom. How he had managed that when he was horrible Transfiguration...Harry smiled...He guessed it was because he was in such a desperate situation.

Harry whispered a shrinking charm on the broom so it could fit inside his backpack. There were things Harry wished he could take but knew he could not. Still wrapped up at the bottom of the trunk was the two-way mirror Sirius gave him. The Marauders Map...all the sweaters Mrs. Weasley gave him...Sentimental things that could keep him on task as to why he was hiding under the cover of death but...People would look for these things to remind them of Harry, he could not take that away from them. Nor reveal something was up.

Placing the fake broom under his bed, Harry stood up, slinging his backpack over his shoulder then his Cloak. He quietly then walked out of the dormitory, down the stairs...he paused as he was about to walk over the threshold of the Common Room. Harry looked back with sigh. He would never see this room again. With a snap the portrait hole closed behind him.

From that moment on, the search began...

Harry knew that in this castle was a Horcrux, Voldemort hid one here knowing no one would guess he would hide a piece of dark magic under Dumbledore's nose. The Ravenclaw Diadem...the last Horcrux that Harry and his friends had found. It would be the first one he would destroy this time around, he was not going to come back here again.

Harry walked down the halls quickly trying not to catch the gaze of Flitch or Mrs. Norris for that matter. At the end of a south corridor was an empty wall. Harry closed his eyes and thought; I need a place to hide something...A door appeared to the Room of Requirement. Harry quickly entered the room and closed the door.

Around him was a dimly lit room full to the brim with objects long hidden or thrown away.

"Accio Diadem!" There was nothing. Just like the last time. Harry wondered if Horcruxes were the exception to the rule about summoning objects. Harry gritted his teeth, he needed this Horcrux! "Accio Horcrux, Ravenclaw's Diadem!" he cried. Incredibly there was crashing and banging as an object flew through the air towards Harry. Harry had not seen the Diadem before as he caught in with the skill of a seeker.

It was made of silver, dripping with sapphires and diamonds, weighing quite heavily in Harry's hands. Harry wondered how this could expand Ravenclaw's knowledge when it looked like something she could wear to a ball! Dismissing the idea, Harry stuffed the Diadem into his backpack then walked out of the Room of Requirement. His next stop would be Dumbledore's office. In his office was the device to destroy Horcruxes. The Sword of Godric Gryffindor.

Last time Harry, Ron and Hermione barely managed to destroy some of the Horcruxes without the sword's help, but the sword did destroy three of the seven Horcruxes. Harry swallowed hard; he was going to have to steal the sword in order to complete his mission. Upon arriving at the griffin statue Harry whispered the password. Without a qualm the statue sprang aide.

Trying to be quiet as possible, just incase someone was in the office or if the figures in the portraits were still there. Harry opened the door, slowly about an inch and peered inside. No one was there and from Harry could see, the figures in the portraits were all gone. Probably to spread the grim message to the rest of the castle that Harry Potter was dead.

Sure enough, when Harry fully stepped inside, all of the portraits' occupants were all gone. Harry would have to work fast if he was to leave without anyone seeing him. Throwing down the Cloak and his bag Harry pulled out the Diadem and left it on the floor. He hurried over to the glass case beside Dumbledore's desk and opened it. Inside was the gleaming sword. Pure silver with the handle having several large rubies on it that seemed to Harry like spots of blood. Engraved on the blade was Gryffindor name.

"Only a true Gryffindor can pull that from the hat..." Harry quoted with a soft smile. Running his fingers over the sword he had not held in three years. Harry then heard the Diadem hiss at him as if it knew what was going to happen. Harry gasped. He had to make this quick...

Harry walked over to the diadem, its jewels glittering up at him like eyes. It made Harry shiver. He raised the sword above his head and without a second thought brought it down onto the Diadem. The sword cut the diadem in half as it smoked and let out a cry of agony. The cry echoed around the room and Harry dove under his Cloak just incase anyone came running.

No one did...

After a few minutes Harry pulled the Cloak off and stared around at the portraits. They did not come back. With a sigh, Harry stood up and picked up the pieces of the diadem and put them on Dumbledore's desk. Picking up the cloak and the bag he stood there in the office. A place with so many memories...good and bad....

Hogwarts was what Harry considered to be home. His true home. This place with friends, family, mentors...magic...fun...Harry felt tears burn at the edges of his eyes as he faced the door. He was going to leave them...this...all behind in order to do what he was born to do. Kill Voldemort, once and for all...he would never see them or Hogwarts again. When he was done with the other Horcruxes he was to die... Hopefully they would find his body and bury him...No one would know Harry was really alive...

As Harry's hand reached for the doorknob, his hand shaking. He then stopped; his hand inches from the knob and lowered his hand. It clenched into a fist. With a growl he threw down his bag and took off the Invisibility Cloak.

He just couldn't do it...

Standing at the doorway to the office, he looked back. The portraits were still gone; there would be no one here to tell Dumbledore they saw Harry Potter in his office...alive. He couldn't go through with having everyone he loved knowing he was dead. He just couldn't, it was cruel and unfair. The guilt was eating away at his soul like ice. He knew his intentions were good, but as they say... 'The road to

Hell is paved with good intentions.' But he could not show his face down in the Great Hall. There was so much grief, sorrow, anger and regret down in that Hall that if he showed his face, he would most likely end up dead. No...he couldn't but...

He could leave a clue. Clues. Hints. Dumbledore would understand them; hopefully he would tell the others there was hope. That Harry was really alive...

Harry walked back over to the desk and pushed the broken pieces of the shattered diadem to the side leaving room for the one Horcrux that had been dead for three years. A Horcrux Dumbledore kept. Tom Riddle's Diary. Yet Harry could not bring himself to go through Dumbledore's desk drawers in search of it. He had already stolen the Gryffindor Sword. He didn't want it to look like vandalism. Harry pulled out his wand again.

"Accio Tom Riddle's Diary!" whispered Harry. A drawer then sprang open and out flew a tattered book into Harry's hands. He pocketed his wand. It was like déjà vu. The last time he held this book he had been a tired, blood, slime and ink covered twelve year old. Who had just saved his best friend's sister from the clutches of a memory-come-to-life of Voldemort's younger-self.

The pages were worn with time. In the center of the entire book was a hole the size of a walnut, of the Basilisk fang that had penetrated the book and destroyed the Horcrux inside. Many of the pages were now crinkled with dried ink and in some spots, blood, Harry's blood. Harry began to flip through the book until he found an entire page at the back of the book that had not been damaged by the ink. Harry took a quill off of Dumbledore's desk, dipped it in ink and wrote...

Professor,

The search begins.

Harry

He then took a piece of the diadem and used it to hold the page with his message on it firmly in place. Harry had suspected by now Dumbledore knew about the Horcruxes, he probably knew for years, for he began to search for them this summer. Harry had to make sure he got to the ring Horcrux before Dumbledore did. For the ring

was to be Dumbledore's death warrant. Hopefully, he would be delayed by the set back of his 'death' and helping the Ministry. But if Dumbledore believed and understood Harry's message, he would have to move fast.

Harry then tore a small section off of the paper and wrote another message he would place in the case:

Sorry, Professor. I need to sword to destroy the Horcruxes. I'll return it as soon as I can.

Harry

Harry then ran over the case that now was empty and placed the piece of paper upright so one would see it when they looked at the case. But, how would Dumbledore believe it was Harry leaving the messages and not a Death Eater? Harry began to search his bag and person. He needed everything he had, his wand, broomstick, everything. But as Harry dug through his pockets he found something that could.

Harry pulled from his pocket the glowing Prophecy. Harry was quite amazed through all of his adventures tonight that the orb had not smashed. Last time it easily broke when Harry tried pulling Neville up the steps. His friends knew he was the one who had the Prophecy, he was sure Dumbledore would confirm that. This was to be his proof.

He then careful placed the Prophecy in the open case next to his note. Hopefully Dumbledore would take a hint. He had two of them now. Hopefully he would believe them, as he was likely to do. Hopefully, he would not keep this a secret, which...sadly, could go both ways. Dumbledore had a great many secrets as Harry knew and he kept them well. Harry prayed he would be merciful and tell everyone he was alright but then again...They did see him go through the Veil, how could he pull that on everyone?

"Guess what Harry's left me clues. He's alive!" Kinda thing. Harry gave a hint of a smile. They would either believe him or...think he'd finally gone off his rocker. Harry went back over to his bag slung it over his shoulder, made sure the sword was attached tightly into his belt and flung the Invisibility Cloak over his head. Harry once again

looked back at the office. The open case and the Horcruxes with Harry's notes were clearly in place.

Now, he could leave.

Harry's soul felt lighter now. They now had clues that he was alive. It would be up to Dumbledore and his friends to believe it. Harry quietly walked to the door. He saw the Great Hall doors were still open and soft voices came from it. Harry had to grip the strap of his bag to keep himself going. Harry felt vaguely numb as he walked out of Hogwarts for the last time. In the distance there was light of the coming dawn. Yet to Harry it seemed like dusk.

As Harry walked the grounds he felt as he did when he walked to his death...Because in a sense that is what he was doing...Walking to his death and to Voldemort's death as well. He passed Hagrid's hut, the lake...Memories flashing over his eyes. Harry shivered as he looked into the darkness of the Forbidden Forest, he would not die there. Cold wind swirled about him as he looked back at the castle one more time.

That was his last look, he would not look again. Harry pulled out his broom, enlarged it to its normal size. Harry mounted the broom. Instead of a Snitch and a Stone to guide him, this time it would be his memories and his heart. He pushed off the ground and flew into the cool morning air. Not knowing where he was going and not carrying, for now his heart was too full of sorrow to care.

Hogwarts and its glimmering lights were in the distance now, calling Harry back. But he did not go back. He did not even look back. If he did...Destiny would have stayed the same.

Chapter 12: Godric's Hollow

Harry flew on and on for hours over forests and mountains, not knowing where he was going to go. The horizon was now stained with the bright colors of the morning, reds, gold's and pinks...Gryffindor colors. Harry sighed as he leaned back slightly; his back was starting to hurt. His Invisibility Cloak whipped in the wind as pieces of it stuck out of his backpack. The Disillusionment charm worked well with hiding Harry as he flew through the sky. The cold wind and the still gnawing guilt in his chest were the only things keeping Harry awake.

He was so tired...He felt as if he had not slept for days. Exhaustion was creeping into Harry, yet where could he go? Number 12 was out of the question, hell, anything near the Wizarding world was out of the question. Privet Drive, nope. He imagined one of the Order members walking up there to tell the Dursleys he was dead. Within 24 hours they would have a party. But where...? Where could he go that could hide him, somewhere no one would suspect he would go? Where he could do magic and keep out of the Ministry's eye and the Death Eaters?

Then a small quiet cottage that was a wreck on the upper floor, protected from Muggles and Death Eaters...The house that it all started in...Godric's Hollow. It was the perfect place to hide. No one would imagine Harry Potter spending his days at the place where his parents died! With all of the enchantments around the house he could do magic and it was well protected from Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Yes. That would be his destination. The only time Harry went there was at Christmas with Hermione via Apparition. Yet, some how, he found his way.

Within a few short hours Harry found the familiar looking village below him, gleaming in the early morning sunlight. Harry landed just outside of town and took off the Disillusionment charm. He traded his broomstick for his cloak as he walked into the village.

Like last time, it was small and quiet; it was still early in the morning so there was hardly anyone outside except for a few Muggle runners and dog walkers. Harry passed the sign that read, 'Welcome to Godric's Hollow.' What a welcome indeed, Harry thought. The morning rays felt warm on his back though he felt cold. As Harry walked along the rows of houses he tried to steel himself

for what he was about to do. He was going to live in the house where his parents died. But...they'd be happy; it's better than camping out in the woods without a tent or trying to rent an apartment in London!

Finally he saw it. The sad, small ruined house that stood at then end of the block. Harry's heartbeat picked up as he walked to the house. It was just as he saw it the last time. The high grass foretold the years the house had been abandoned. The upper right side of the house was caved in from the blast of the Killing Curse that bounded off the infant Harry. Harry shivered as memories of that night flashed over his mind...Voldemort's memories. Harry placed a hand on the gate and the familiar sign sprang up to greet him. Harry read the words carved into the wooden sign and sighed...That faith was about to be broken in a few days time.

Harry pushed opened the gate with a creak and walked up the overgrown walkway to the house, each step bringing in a quicker breath. He had not been here in fifteen years...The front door was locked, probably to keep people out of the house. Harry waved his wand and the door unlocked, he was too nervous as the door creaked open to notice he did wordless magic. With a soft sigh Harry stepped inside...

The golden sunlight made its way through the windows illuminating the house in a soft glow. As Harry walked across the threshold, patches of dust rose at his feet. His heartbeat sounded in his ears. Harry looked down at the floor, the threshold of the house...this is where his father died...Harry knelt down and touched the floor. Harry shivered, it was as if...

He quickly stood up, shaking his head, blocking out the tears. As he walked around the house, he was shivering. Old pictures covered in dust stared at him. Pictures of Lily and James during happier times. Times at school, their wedding, their families. The Marauders dominated many of the pictures, waving and smiling at them. The thing that made Harry's heart ache was that wherever he looked in the house, there were pictures of him. The Dursleys never put pictures of him up in the house, never. As he walked into the sitting room, a large family portrait dominated the space over the fireplace. Harry reached out with shaking fingers to touch the dusty faces of his father and mother. His younger self smiling and waving his toy

with no idea of the danger they all were to face. Of the life he was to live.

Harry slumped onto the dusty couch as he put his head into his hands. Something bumped softly into him. Harry looked up to see a dusty wand lying next to his leg. Harry picked it up and played his fingers over it. It was his father's wand. He had to grit his teeth to keep the tears in. James never had a chance with or without a wand. Harry pocketed his father's wand. Harry explored the house, room by room. He knew he'd have to clean the house and buy food. How he was to do that, he had no idea.

With the bottom of the house explored, Harry felt a sense of dread to enter the top half of the house. Partly because of worry the house was unstable upstairs and partly because of fear. Upstairs was where it all began for him. Yet, he gathered his courage with each step until he reached the landing. Beams and pieces of wood and other things were scattered all around him. Yet, there was a clear passageway to the side of the house that had once been his room. Harry's breath came in sharp as he maneuvered around the wooden beams and sharp edges. Harry finally reached the blasted door, which had been knocked off its hinges.

The room was painted blue; it had faded after years of being exposed to the elements. Toys and other items were lying on the floor, scattered, tattered and shattered on floor. The back wall had been blasted apart by the rebounded curse; pieces of his crib were in piles on the burnt carpet. Harry knelt down and touched the place on the floor where his crib was. His fingers touched a soft piece of fabric. Harry gasped.

He pulled it out from under the pieces of his crib, it was a blanket. Worn from use or time, it was blue like the room. Harry held it softly in his hands. In one corner it was embroidered with a golden Snitch and the letters 'H.P.' Harry for some strange reason brought it to his nose, it smelled like...He couldn't place it like baby powder and something else, something sweet. This was his baby blanket. Harry gave a small laugh, most teenagers would hate to see such things from their babyhood, but Harry did not care. As he turned it over, the underside had splotches and drops of blood. Tears welled in his eyes; this was where it all began. Where his parents died, where he became a Horcrux....the Boy-Who-Lived...The Chosen One...

Harry did not know for how long he knelt there holding the blanket, crying. The grief and sorrow taking hold of him. Years of sorrow...years of emotions he did not show to the world. All the death...All for him...After awhile Harry stood up, tucking the blanket in his pocket. He explored the upper part of the house slowly. Harry eventually found the room farthest down the hall from his room. His parents' room.

Harry pulled the door open, it was a soft cream color pictures plastered the walls. A bookcase full of books was left of the bathroom. Harry ran his fingers over the books. Many of them were on defensive and offensive spells. These would help him with his fighting and dueling, Harry couldn't help but smile. His parents were very good duelers, he had seen that in the Veil. As Harry walked around the bed on the bedside table was his mother's wand. It had not been used in years. Harry picked it up and played his fingers over it. She had left it here, that's why...

Harry then rummaged through the drawers, looking for anything that might bring back memories. Harry found under the dusty book was a box. Harry pulled it out thinking it was a box of photos. But inside the box was a bag of Wizard money and Muggle money; Harry was not surprised at the large amount of money in the house. If the family had to move quickly then they needed both sets of money. Harry felt quite happy that he would not have to go to Gringotts for money. Muggle money was better if he wanted to stay out of the Wizarding world for awhile.

Harry explored the house, taking in everything. By the time he had finished his walk the sun had fully risen. Exhausted, Harry knew that before he fell asleep he had to clean the house. Rolling up his sleeves he used cleaning spells he found in a book in his parents' bedroom and that he had learned during his stay at Number 12.

Dust disappeared; much of the damage that could be fixed was; yet the top part of the house was still damaged. By 9 o'clock Harry was done, with the house cleaned he locked the windows and doors. Gathering some blankets and pillows he found in the closet upstairs he fell into a deep sleep on the couch. He could not bear to sleep in his parents' bed it brought about too much hurt. For the first time in what seemed to be weeks, Harry slept a peaceful sleep.

The next few days were catch and go for Harry. He kept a low profile around the house; he kept the curtains at the front of the house closed while the ones at the back of the house remained opened. Yet for the first few days Harry watched to see if masses of witches and wizards would visit the house with the news of his death. By the third day, Harry knew Dumbledore was keeping it quiet for as long as he could, if he didn't believe the clues Harry left behind.

Three days after he arrived, Harry had slept for nearly two days, waking up once and awhile to check outside, he gathered up his Invisibility Cloak and the Muggle money found in his parents' room and went shopping. He stayed in the small market area of the town, buying what he needed such as food, clothes and other things. When he was to go back into the Wizarding world, Harry did not know. He knew he would either have to go in disguise or under his Cloak. He had yet to make up his mind, which one to use.

Harry kept his head low under his sweater hood. If there were any wizards walking around here, he did not want to be recognized. He knew he had to get news on what was going on soon; he could not stay in the dark for long. Meaning, he'd have to return to the world he left. Harry walked home carrying several bags, the muscles in his arms seizing in agony from the weight. He could not use magic; only God knows when the Tracer would be lifted.

As Harry came up the street, he put on his Invisibility Cloak as he shuffled his bags around to cover himself completely. He knew for the next few days he needed to lay low, goodness knows that Godric's Hollow would become a memorial to Harry was soon as the news was broken to the Wizarding world. Sure enough as Harry rounded the corner, there was candles and flowers laid at the front of the house. Either the news of Harry's death had been broken publicly or someone from the Order or with a student in Hogwarts left those there. Harry looked around to see if anyone was around. There was not, but a few Muggles who stared at the candles and flowers oddly. Luckily they all came when Harry was gone.

Harry opened the door to the house then locked it. After settling his bags on the counter he put away the food. Cold stuff was kept in a cooler since the fridge no longer worked. Harry knew tomorrow he'd have to read some the books upstairs on keeping things cool. At nine Harry went to bed, he only kept a few candles lit at night. This

was would a difficult few weeks ahead. With the news of his death, he'd have to stay low as people visited the shrine to the Potter family.

Harry flopped onto the couch pulling the blankets under his chin with a sigh. He couldn't stay like this for long. He would have to see what was going on in his world soon...Hopefully it wouldn't be from under the Cloak, he thought as he faded into sleep.

Chapter 13: The Phoenix

The streets of Diagon Alley were quiet and tense, very different than what the streets had been before. Bustling, noisy and crowded, as it was in the past, no more. A mournful hush came over the streets, foretelling death and destruction around the corner. A silent, black robed figure walked the streets easily, his hood covering his face. He made no sound he just...walked.

The figure took in the dismal streets and shops as people rushed by without a glance. They didn't even noticed what he wore openly on his robes. They were lined at the sleeves and the hem in silver. Black gloves covered his hands. On the right side of his chest was a silver Phoenix that glinted hauntingly in the light. His eyes roamed around the alley, he felt quite sad, and he had seen it at better times. Happier times when the shadow of Voldemort and his Death Eaters did not strike fear into the hearts of men. Yet...he had seen it like this too, during a time that seemed to be a long time ago...

A sharp wind blew up, scattering warning signs, Wanted posters and newspapers into the air. The figure's cloak blew away from his torso, showing an array of tools and pouches around what only could be described as an Aurors belt. A small knife was hooked to his left side and strapped onto his right leg was a wand belt with his wand in place. If one took a closer look at him, one might think they saw a young Auror. He was young. His hood blew off which he instantly grabbed and ducked his head to hide his face. Dark hair...dark eyes, yet...a calm face...a kind face...

After buttoning his cloak back over his dark clothing and pulling his hood up was the figure satisfied. Something rolled across his foot and stuck to his pant leg. He bent down and picked it up, it was the Daily Prophet from yesterday. The headline was, 'The Boy Who Lived's Funeral, Today.' The figure frowned; it was only three days ago the Wizarding world was informed that during a scuffle in the Department of Mysteries, Harry Potter was killed. He had been forced through the Veil of Death; there was no body to bury.

The figure bit his lip to keep the cry of agony down his throat and the tears in his eyes. The paper was moving in the telling of the funeral, hundreds had gathered for the event. They had all gathered outside for the event since so many people showed for the funeral. Hundreds of chairs lined the front lawn of Hogwarts. There was a

stage with a coffin in full view, even though there was no body to bury. The figure skimmed the first few lines of the part on the funeral, but couldn't read it. He didn't want to. The paper then went into detail about the boy's life that he was a hero for the ages, showing bravery and courage to stand up for what he believed in. The figure lowered the paper and snorted, until three days ago the Ministry and the Prophet had called the dead boy a liar.

Suddenly drops of water fell on the paper, blotting the face of an innocent looking Harry Potter. Rain began to fall hard onto the Alley. People raced around the figure to get to shelter. The figure just stepped under a building, the paper kept safe under his robes. Leaning against the cold stone the figure continued to read the paper. The paper expressed its grief and remorse for calling the boy a liar knowing that Voldemort truly was back as the boy had said. The figure rolled his eyes.

"Among those who attended the funeral were the entire Weasley family, Potter's close friends, Miss Granger, Mr. Longbottom, Miss Lovegood, etc, and friends of his parents' Remus Lupin and the recently freed Sirius Black, Potter's godfather..." The figure smiled, within hours of Peter Pettigrew's capture and confession was Sirius Black released from all charges that were brought against him fifteen years ago. The Ministry was making amends to Sirius in the days ahead. Yet Sirius was never able to comment on the matter, too lost in his grief at the death of his godson.

The paper spoke of moving speeches given in Harry's honor by those who knew him best. Mr and Mrs. Weasley...their son, Ron Weasley...Potter's friend Hermione Granger...Remus Lupin...even the boy's godfather who couldn't even finish because his grief took over him and he had to be dragged off the stage sobbing. Albus Dumbledore, of course, made the most moving speech he spoke of Harry's courage, loyalty and his belief in the truth.

"Harry Potter, is not to be remembered not as the Boy-Who-Lived, but as Harry. That's what he said to everyone...When he first learned he was a wizard, 'I'm Harry...Just Harry,'"

As the figure read word for word of the speech, his eyes clouded with tears. He could remember a funeral...moving speeches...people in tears, but not...He could not even finish Dumbledore's speech without crumpling the paper and throwing it

into the rain. With a huff, he battered the tears off his face as he walked down the alley and Apparated out of sight.

He appeared again on a simple street corner. The figure walked these streets even though he was soaked to the bone because of the rain, too lost in his thoughts. As he came around the corner, he saw a house on the end, destroyed. The house was destroyed in the right upper side of the house. Yet when he looked up he saw people, witches and wizards standing in front of the house, dressed in black. He noticed the people were crying, sobbing, mothers holding onto the hands of their children. The figure swore quietly as he pulled his cloak closer to shield him from the cold and the rain. People carried candles that did not go out and laid flowers in front of the house. Rows and upon rows of flowers and candles...

Rubbing his gloved hands together he walked around the large group of people, lowering his head. He continued to walk around the small town though the rain had now soaked his clothes. The words of the newspaper article about Harry Potter, droning through his head. He walked around and around, the town as he rubbed his hands together. As he passed the cemetery he caught a glimpse of two men standing in the rain. He stopped; it seemed odd that people would visit the graves in the rain. He walked closer to see who it was. The figure felt his heart clench, he knew these two....His feet moved on their own, through the tombstones and the rain. He walked up to a tombstone close to the two men and watched them, his heart pounding.

Remus Lupin and Sirius Black stood in the rain, soaked to the bone, staring down at two headstones. One was old, showing age and time, the other brand new the white marble gleaming in the rain. Sirius slumped to the ground, not caring that he was getting mud on his robes, his tears intermingling with the rain. The old tombstone was marked with the names of Harry's parents, Lily and James. It was the first time Sirius had seen their grave; he had been in Azkaban when his friends had been buried. The grave was marked:

James Potter: Born 27 March 1960, Died: 31 October 1980

Lily Potter: Born 30 January 1960, Died: 31 October 1980

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Sirius ran his fingers over the names of Lily and James, he had failed them. He had failed them in worst possible way: he let their son, Harry, die before his eyes. Unable to do a thing to save the boy. Remus stood behind him staring down at his best friend, his sobs echoing in the cold air. A few tears fell down Remus' face, his brown-amber eyes lifeless and cold. How could this happen? Lily and James expected them to take care of Harry...

The figure walked closer, his heart in his throat; the rain glistened on the new headstone. He knew what it was...yet he dared to look. Written in stone was a name.

Harry James Potter

Born: 31 July 1980 Died: 2nd June 1996

Sirius' fingers now traced every letter of Harry's name, his hand was shaking. The figure watched as Sirius' face faded from the kept, calm look to one of pure agony.

"Why?" screamed Sirius for the hundredth time since Harry died, "Why did it have to be him? It should have been me!" Sirius clutched the headstone, sobbing. The figure's entire body clenched, once upon a time...it had been Sirius...A Veil...a cry...The figure shook his head to remove the images from his head. Remus finally fell to his knees next to his friend and held him tightly.

"If anything, Sirius, I am to blame! I should have held onto him, I should have never let him go!" In the distance where the church was there was a peal of a bell, a mournful bell that echoed around the graveyard. The figure stood transfixed, watching the two men.

"They blame themselves for..." the figure whispered, he clutched his chest as he looked to the ground. He was in agony; his heart ached for them, for himself. What had he done? But...he had to...if only...no...As the bell tolled the group that was at the front of the house before made their way to the grave. The figure turned, keeping his head low. Albus Dumbledore, along with the new Minister of Magic led the way. The figure frowned at the Minister while he thought, No poster boy this time, huh?

There were faces; so many faces he recognized that saw him and did not recognized him. The tears, the agony it made him want to

scream, to run; yet his body was locked in place. It was as if he was ghost. Yet, in fact, in a strange way, he was a ghost...He was vaguely aware it was a funeral, a second funeral for Harry Potter. The first had been a public one since the age of one the boy had been a public figure. Yet this one was for those who truly loved the boy for who he was, why the Minister was here seemed out of place.

"We commend....our brother Harry Potter; and we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth; ashes to ashes, dust to dust...."

To the figure it seemed all a dream, a numbing dream that made him want to scream. No don't, it can't be...please...don't cry...

"...and give him peace. Amen."

Yet he was not at peace...

The Amen pulled him from his state and he ran, he ran until he reached the broken house the group had been at earlier. The Potters' old house, where Lily and James had died...a memorial to the family who died trying to defeat Voldemort. Gasping, the figure pulled out his wand and unlocked the door and threw himself inside.

The figure slammed the door behind him and locked it. Breathing hard, he leaned against the door, breath hissing through his teeth. He had to calm down...With a sigh he swept his hood off his face revealing, messy black hair and dark eyes. With a sigh he stripped off his soaked cloak and robes, throwing them over a chair. With a swish of his wand he lighted a small fire in the fireplace in the den. The house was old, clean but old. It had not been used in over fifteen years yet this was his home...for now.

He then unstrapped his wand belt placing it on the table along with the Auror belt. On the table already was a towel and a bowl of water. Ripping off his gloves, the figure tapped his forehead with his wand. The smooth skin gave way to the appearance of heavily applied make up. The figure scrubbed his face clean until the make up on his forehead vanished, leaving a scar in the shape of a lightning bolt in its place. The figure then removed the contacts he wore, black in color to disguise his bright green eyes. He replaced the contacts with glasses and placed the contacts safely away.

The figure was not just anyone, but the thought to be dead, Harry Potter. Harry slumped against the couch, rubbing his eyes. He could not believe he had just ran into his own funeral! Three days ago did Dumbledore break his silence and told the world Harry was dead. Since then Harry could barely leave the house, only at night. Pilgrims came from all over England to Godric's Hollow, to the memorial of the Potter family.

Today had been Harry's first real test of his disguise and it worked. He had bought the prescription colored contacts and heavy stage make up in town. He had order several pairs of contacts along with new robes, using a fake name. Not even his friends at the funeral who saw him didn't even blink, they just kept going, and it worked! Harry gave a sad smile, if those closest to him could not recognize him, then who would?

Harry laid there, his head aching, his heart pounding in his chest...self-restraint, a quality Harry possessed quite well. It took everything Harry had not to run to a sobbing Sirius and take away his grief. The only thing that stopped him was the flash of death before his eyes. Of those whom he saw die, those who died for him, those who could still die...He could not let that happen, never. He'd die first...

Harry's scar then stung. With a hiss he clapped his hands over his forehead and instantly put up his defenses. Within moments the pain died away. Harry wondered if the connection between himself and Voldemort was growing stronger again? Would the Dark Lord sense that he was alive soon? More importantly did Dumbledore believe his hints he left? It was hard to tell. Dumbledore spent most of his time these days; according to the Daily Prophet, he was helping the new Minister. Harry snorted, as if the damage could be fixed.

If Dumbledore believed them, would he come looking for Harry? That was one of the two things he feared the most: Dumbledore finding him and dragging him back before he was finished and Voldemort discovering his plans before he could find and kill the remaining Horcruxes. Harry fiddled with his wand, which Horcrux to get first? Nagini would have to be second to last, that left the locket, the ring and the cup. The locket would easiest to get, it was still at Number 12, and he'd just have to be careful. Only God knows if he'd walk into an Order meeting or his grief stricken godfather. The ring was Dumbledore's death warrant; he needed to get to before he did.

And if Dumbledore believed his hints would he go after it himself or leave it to Harry? The cup was God knows where, hopefully in Gringotts, but breaking into the bank alone would be harder than with two others helping.

Harry shut his eyes as a headache took over; he'd decide tonight which one to go after and start tomorrow. As he tried to fade into sleep there was a sudden knock at a back window. Harry sat up, wand in hand. Slowly he reached for his Cloak next to the couch and threw it over himself. Was it someone trying to get in, a Death Eater? Or was it the wind? Harry slowly walked to the back window as the tapping continued. Harry gasped at what he saw.

A snow-white owl was perched just outside the window, trying to stay away from the rain. It was...

"Hedwig?" Harry pulled the Cloak off and with a swish of his wand unlocked the window. Hedwig flew in with a soft swish and landed on the table. Harry poked his head out the window and looked around, no one was there. He then locked the window and turned to his owl.

"How did you find me?" he asked her, reaching out a hand to pet her. Hedwig ruffled her feathers in anger and bit Harry's finger. "Ow!" She always nipped at him when she was angry with him, but this time she drew blood. Harry stuck his finger in his mouth and growled. The owl then turned her back on him.

"I'm sorry I worried you!" spat Harry, "But this is the only way to destroy the Horcruxes and save everyone...even you..." The owl turned her head to look at him, her amber eyes sparkling with a look like, 'Oh really?'

Harry yanked a chair out from under the table and faced to look at his owl. She had died on the night of his final departure from his aunt and uncle's house. Harry reached out again and this time she grudgingly let him pet her. They remained like that, Hedwig finally relaxing, rubbing her head against Harry's hand. She looked at him like, 'Why did you disappear?'

"I told you, this is the only way to end Voldemort." The rain pattered the roof and the grey skies were making him sleepily. He rested his head on one arm as he petted Hedwig.

"You can't stay here..." Hedwig ruffled her feathers in anger and gave a hoot of anger. Harry rolled his eyes; he hoped she'd see this. "Look, people will notice you've gone missing and will look for you and I need to stay hidden. I can't use you because this is suppose to be a dead house and white owl leaving it will raise questions especially when everyone knows you are my owl." Hedwig lowered herself to be on his level, green staring into amber. Harry's brows knitted, he was not in the mood to argue with her! Hedwig looked at him with a look that said, 'Why not?'

"Because!" said Harry in a low growl, he looked away from her. As much as he would like her company, people would look for her, use her as a tool to comfort themselves with his death. Yet...yet when Dumbledore died Fawkes flew away...but that was a Phoenix, did owls fly away when their masters died? Harry didn't care. "Look..." he said gently, petting her again, "You can stay for the night, but tomorrow you must leave."

Hedwig made an odd noise that sounded like a growl; she did not want to leave him. Harry sat up in the chair, groaning. He ran his hands over his face, this was tough. He loved her loyalty before but now, he needed her to go.

"You must! You have four options!" Harry held up four fingers before her so she could see them, "Hogwarts, Ron, Hermione or Sirius, pick!" Hedwig blinked at him. Harry gave a small smile. "You can visit me once and awhile if you want I make no promises if I will be home or not. No more than twice a month, got it?" Hedwig nodded, good, she agreed to that. Hedwig then nipped at the finger for Ron. Harry felt himself frown, he'd rather her go to Sirius but...

"Alright, Ron it is, you leave in the morning." He then let her hop onto his arm and he carried her out to the den. He then settled against the couch with Hedwig on his lap. As he petted her, he saw out of the corner of his eye was his robe with the phoenix on it. The phoenix glittering in the firelight, Harry smiled.

He had chosen the symbol of the Phoenix on his robes for several reasons. One: the Phoenix was the symbol of rebirth and Harry had twice 'died' and was 'reborn.' Second: it was the symbol of the Order of the Phoenix, the organization that fought against Voldemort.

Third: the Phoenix was Dumbledore's symbol and as rumors say, the only one Voldemort truly fears above all.

"Hey Hedwig...To the Wizarding world, Harry Potter is dead...so a Phoenix must rise from his ashes...To the world...I will not be known as Harry, but The Phoenix..."

Chapter 14: Number 12 Grimmauld Place

A darkened street lay quiet in the deep of night; it was near midnight....the eerie silence seemed to echo about the street. At the end of the street sat a quiet, old house, yet it was a house only wizards could see. Only the proper wizards, could see it. It was Number 12 Grimmauld Place, the headquarters for the Order. Wards and barriers surrounded the house to keep out Death Eaters, spies and Voldemort himself. The house belonged to Sirius Black and no one knew someone thought dead would pay a visit.

A crack echoed through the chilly June night. The dark cloaked figure of the Phoenix, no Harry Potter appeared. He was in disguise again, scar hidden, contacts in place, wand in hand. Earlier that day Harry sent Hedwig to Ron's house; she was reluctant to go; yet she went with a promise from Harry that she could visit soon. He wished he could send a letter with her to tell them he was okay. What he had to do, that he was to...

Harry ducked his head under his hood and he shook his head, no he could not think like that! A chilly wind swept through him, he pulled his robes closer to him. With a fast run, he reached the end of the street and his godfather's house. He could see it, that was a good thing. That means the wards will let him in, he then pulled his Cloak over himself, wrapping up tightly in it. Harry breathed in deeply, trying to calm himself. What would happen if the wards did not let him in? What if the wards let Sirius know he was there? He couldn't sit around to find out, he quickly and carefully passed through the wards, and he then waited. He waited for Sirius or an Order member to come running out. Yet in never happened.

Harry quietly walked up the steps to the house and waved his wand to unlock the door. The door creaked open slightly and Harry opened it well enough to slide inside without further noise. He then closed the door and locked it. The only sound to be heard was the creaking of the house. Harry sighed, good the Order was not here. Question was, was Sirius in the house? He had to get the locket no matter what. Harry pulled the Cloak tighter to him.

He was careful on where to step; he knew every creak in the house after spending a few months at the house during the Horcrux hunt. He slowly made his way to the den, where the glass case was that held the locket. As he came around the corner and with each step

he got closer to the case, his palms were sweating and he could swear his heart beat was the loudest thing the room. His shaking hand was inches from the case, inches from the Horcrux, fear of the Order discovering him racing through his veins when...A bottle fell with a clink onto the floor.

Harry spun around on the spot, wand out, had someone seen or heard him come in? Yet there was only one other person in the room dead asleep on the couch, Sirius. Sirius was sprawled out on the couch, a book across his lap and about six bottles of Fire Whiskey on the floor. Harry could hear the blood pounding in his ears. His wand hand shaking as it remained trained on his sleeping godfather. After several tense moments Harry lowered his wand, with a swish he unlocked the case and called the locket into his hand. The instant it touched his skin, his scar stung, yep, this was it.

Closing the case and slipping the locket into his pocket, Harry moved toward his godfather. Careful of the bottles he was curious to see what his drunken godfather was looking at. At first glance Harry thought it was a book, but it was a photo album. A photo album full of moving pictures of his parents, Remus, Sirius and himself as a baby....He felt his breath leave him. Sirius was trying to remember him, Harry looked down at the bottles on the floor. Or trying to drown himself in his sorrow and grief with memories and whiskey. Harry felt tears burn in his eyes. He had never seen these photos before, was Sirius going to show him these had he not died? Harry smiled at his godfather; he needed to get out of here. He could not stay here. He then took a step back and knocked into a bottle causing it to fall over with a clank. Harry bit his lip until it bled, praying that his godfather stayed asleep. It did not work, Sirius groaned and was staring to wake up. Harry backed up against the wall, pulling the Cloak tighter to him; he had to get out now.

Too late.

Remus at that very moment walked into the room, he could not escape now. Harry backed against the wall in the corner. Remus sighed as he caught sight of Sirius on the couch and the bottles on the floor. Harry noticed that Remus looked older, the lines on his face were deeper, the circles under his eyes darker and the grays in his hair more and darker. He looked worst than after Sirius had died...Sirius stretched and yawned.

"Sirius, why?" Remus asked, slumping into an armchair close to Sirius. Sirius rubbed his eyes and blinked, looking down at the bottles, then frowned.

"I guess I had one too many," he then stared down at the photo album in his lap. A sorrowful look came over his face as he stared at the faces of those he thought was dead. "It's been a week, Remus, a week since Harry..." Sirius swallowed hard, his hands turning into fists. Remus reached out and put a hand on Sirius' shoulder.

"He wouldn't want you to suffer like this, drinking your sorrows away." Sirius snorted as he closed the photo album and put it on the table. "This is not the way to mourn."

"Who says? This is my way!" Sirius stood up and began to pace the floor. Harry could clearly see his face now; he looked worse than he did when he got out of Azkaban. Remus put his head into his hands.

"You never did fully grieve for Lily and James did you?" Sirius stopped pacing to look at his friend. Remus was now looking at him fully, the room was silent. Sirius looked defeated, it was true. He never had time, one minute he was at Lily and James' grief stricken at their deaths, Harry taken from him, the next filled with rage as he chased after Peter, then haunted as he found himself in Azkaban.

"Yeah, you're right. I never had time when Lily and James..." Sirius slumped into a chair. "I need a month at least, Remus." Remus shook his head, the Order needed Sirius, they would allow him a month to grieve for Harry and to keep him out of battle. Sirius would surely get himself killed chasing after Harry's killer. Remus knew that they didn't need the manpower. When Harry's death was announced the members of the Order doubled over night. Half of the Order was doing background checks to make sure no one was a spy. Veritaserum was produced daily.

"You'll never stop mourning Harry..." whispered Remus, Sirius chuckled he knew that, he loved Harry deeply. Remus then walked around the table and saw the photo album on the table.

"Why do you do this to yourself?" he asked showing Sirius the photo album. Sirius gave a small smile as tears built in his eyes. All he could do was shake his head. Remus then shoved the album under his arm.

"I was going to show that Harry this summer. I found it after Christmas..." Sirius then put his face into his hands as he began to sob. Remus sighed and walked over to Sirius forcing him onto his feet.

"Its about time I throw you into a cold shower," He then grabbed his arm and yanked him up the stairs. Sirius did not want to go but followed Remus, saddened and drunk. Harry remained still against the wall, his heart pounding and his breathing slow and quiet. The locket felt heavy in his pocket as his heart felt heavy. Sirius was so grief stricken, so was Remus. He hoped Sirius wasn't like this all the time, drinking his way through his grief.

Harry wanted to leave Sirius a message, clues like he had left Dumbledore, yet he was afraid that if he did Sirius would drown deeper in his grief and/or go mad. Harry bit his lip he was torn, should he or should he not? Harry argued with himself, he could not stay here long he needed to make a decision. Kicking himself Harry found a spare piece of parchment on the table with a quill and ink left by Sirius. There was a mass of papers, letters it appeared from others expressing their grief over Harry's death. Harry found a spare, blank piece and wrote,

It's alright Sirius

Harry

Harry then summoned a bottle from the floor and placed the bottle over the words so that when someone picked it up and could see the words. With a nod Harry was satisfied with what he wrote.

The locket was weighing heavy in his pocket; Harry did not bring the sword with him because he knew he needed to destroy the locket at Godric's Hallow. Horcruxes scream in agony when they are destroyed, too much attention.

He then decided it was time to go. He pulled the Cloak tighter as he walked to the door. He could not hear any sounds from the upstairs rooms. Harry sighed as he unlocked the door with the swish of his wand and stepped outside. He walked back up the drive and away from wards. With a final glance at Number 12, Harry Apparated away from those who loved him.

He appeared again in Godric's Hollow, Harry shivered. The locket was gripped in his hand as he pulled off the Cloak, slipped his wand back into his wand belt. He then laid the locket on the floor; he knew he needed to act quickly with this Horcrux. It would show your worst fears to make you forget your mission to destroy in. Harry strode into the den and pulled out from under a cloth, under a coffee table a sword: the gleaming silver and ruby sword of Gryffindor. Harry saw his reflection flicker in the polished silver. He had to do this.

With the sword gripped tight in both hands Harry walked into the hallway, where his father had died. It was irony he was about to destroy a piece of Voldemort's soul where his father had died defending his family. He reversed the sword so that the blade faced the Horcrux. He raised the sword above his head. Then with a whisper that was hiss he said,

"Open..."

The locket clicked open and slowly opened fully as the screams of men and hissing of snakes filled the air. Harry aimed and brought the sword down before the soul fragment could find his greatest fear. The Horcrux screamed and hissed in agony as the insides of the locket melted as the soul piece was shattered. With a smile, Harry lowered the sword, three down four to go. Harry picked up the locket and weighed it in his hands. It was harmless now. This one had been easy, the next one would be harder and he had to get to it soon. The ring was next. Dumbledore was the next to be saved.

Harry then went to the den and wrote on the parchment he had bought at the Alley. It was a quick letter to Dumbledore. He wanted his mentor to receive each Horcrux. To be hints and warnings into what he was doing. Meaning: stay out of my way, I will take care of this. Harry signed the letter then read it over,

Dear Professor,

Here is Horcrux Number 3. I will soon be after Number 4, don't worry, I'll take care of the Horcruxes. I know where they are; you and the Order just keep the Death Eaters off my back.

Sincerely,

The Phoenix

Harry knew that if the letter fell into the hands of the Death Eaters he did not need them to know Harry Potter was really alive. So in order to protect himself and his friends he used his persona instead, hoping Dumbledore would catch it. With a nod, Harry folded up the letter into the pre-addressed envelope. Inside he slipped the locket then sealed it. He then made a trip to Diagon Alley and had a postal owl carry the letter to Dumbledore. With a sigh, Harry went home hoping Dumbledore and Sirius would take their hints. Sirius to cheer up and question his death and Dumbledore to let him take care of the Horcruxes.

Hopefully...

Chapter 15: The Order and the Horcruxes

Number 12 was no longer quiet as it had been a few days before. The house was now full to the brim with thirty or so people crammed around the long table in the kitchen. Dumbledore sat at the head of the table with members of the Order from the old days around the table. Maps were laid out on the table along with two letters and a box. Someone who called himself the Phoenix sent the letters to Dumbledore.

"According to Severus," said Dumbledore, gesturing to Snape in the corner of the room, "The Death Eaters are planning on using Harry Potter's death to attack the Ministry." Sirius growled at Molly's right. She reached out and placed a hand on his shoulder to calm him. The room tensed as pain echoed around every person in the room. Only a handful in that room had known Harry Potter personally and the pain of his death had wounded them more deeply than others. Many had joined the Order when Potter's death was announced to revenge the boy and all those who had died under the hands of the Dark Lord and his followers.

"We must make sure the Aurors are ready, for we are," said Tonks, twirling her wand through her fingers as she leaned on Remus' shoulder. Moody nodded in return. They would be ready before the Death Eaters would even strike.

"We're briefing them this afternoon," grunted Moody, Dumbledore nodded as they examined detailed maps of the Ministry. Every level of the Ministry in full detail areas marked in red, where the Death Eaters were planning to attack. Areas marked in purple were where they would enter and areas in blue where they might exit.

"The Death Eaters' target is the Minister and those who could take his place if he dies. Then Voldemort will try to take the seat of power," said Dumbledore, a chill passed through the Order. The faces were cold and stony, they were ready to fight. Ready to take back their world from the man that was causing fear in every heart.

"We must be ready to take the Minister from the Ministry if we must, to Hogwarts. There are no students there now, it's the safest place." Many nodded in agreement. With Arthur and Tonks' help they were able make a plan of attack and defense.

"How do we know if they will attack?" asked one witch, squashed into the background.

"I will give you a warning if and when the time comes for the attack if it is still planned," said Snape coldly from where he was. "But as of now, it is only a plan." With a nod from Dumbledore he clapped his hands and gave them a smile.

"Thank you for your time, today, ladies and gentlemen. The next meeting is to be next Saturday at 10:00 P.M. but if there is any developments I will call an emergency meeting, you know how you are summoned." The Order members nodded and with that they were dismissed. All but for a few whom Dumbledore trusted. Severus, Minerva, Kingsley, the Weasleys, Sirius, Remus, Moody, and Tonks. They pushed aside the maps and turned to three objects in the box Dumbledore brought and two letters sent by the man called the Phoenix.

"What are all of these Albus?" asked McGonagall staring at the broken diadem, the locket and the diary. The diary she recognized, as did the Weasleys, it was the object that nearly sent their daughter to her death had it not been for Harry.

"What is that thing doing here?" said Arthur in a growl, pointing at the diary. Dumbledore smiled as he gestured for everyone to sit down; there was a scrapping of chairs and benches on the wooden floor.

"That is a easy question to answer," said Dumbledore coolly, with a wave of his wand, the three Horcruxes hovered above the table, "It all has to do with our new friend, the Phoenix and...a way to destroy Voldemort once and for all." All eyes turned to the old mage and whispers started to ripple up and down the table.

"How?" asked Tonks, pointing at the objects, "They are just random pieces of junk!" Dumbledore chuckled, if only they knew, he was about to educate them. He trusted them with this, as he would have trusted Harry....

"These are not just random pieces of junk, they are Horcruxes," A deadly silence fell over the room at the seriousness of Dumbledore's voice. Their eyes fell on the objects floating above them.

"What is that?" asked Sirius, his eyebrows rising.

"They are magical objects, which at first are ordinary objects, as you can see. A Horcrux is a dark piece of magic, very dark. Its purpose: to hold a piece of a person's soul in that object so that if the body is destroyed a piece of the soul is there and still living."

The silence in the room was deafening, several jaws had dropped and eyes widened. Dark looks then came over their faces as they processed the information. Sirius looked ready to kill, Remus' eyes went dark, they knew where this was leading.

"This is how Voldemort survived the Killing Curse that rebounded off of Harry," At the mention of Harry's name, faces became sad, "These are three of seven Horcruxes I am sure, Voldemort as made."

"Seven?" cried Moody, "Seven of them? How in the hell do you make them?" He pounded the table with his fist, as everyone in the room looked ten times more shocked at this news.

"Murder. The only way to make a Horcrux is to murder someone because it is a crime against humanity, that splits the soul," said Snape, as everyone then looked to him. Then looked back to Dumbledore for confirmation, at which he nodded.

"So," said Remus, standing up, "These are three of the Horcruxes—"

"Do they still have a piece of his soul in them?" asked Sirius, pointing his wand at them, with a murderous look in his eyes. Molly and Arthur stared at the diary in horror. A piece of Voldemort's soul had possessed their daughter?

"Dumbledore...Ginny, she..." sputtered Molly, looking fearfully and with anger at the object that had nearly cost her Ginny. Dumbledore gave her a small smile.

"No, there is no lasting damage, as soon as Harry used the Basilisk fang to destroy the diary the piece of the soul was destroyed forever." Molly then breathed a sigh of relief. He then turned to Sirius' question and the murderous look in Sirius' eye.

"No, Sirius, all of these Horcruxes are dead," Sirius then deflated as he sank back into his chair with a mad look on his face like a spoiled child who had been denied a treat. Dumbledore then pushed forward the two letters sent by the Phoenix.

"These are from our friend, the Phoenix, who takes responsibility for destroying the diadem and the locket," The letters were then passed around and read. The letters were brief, the first dated the day after Harry's death was announced with a deep regret for the boy's death and he was willing to help the Order in anyway he could. To send him an owl whenever they needed him, it would find him. The second letter told him that he destroyed the locket Horcrux and he knew where the others were, he would take care of them.

"This 'Phoenix' who the hell is he?" asked Moody, putting the letter back on the table. Tonks leaned over his arm to reexamine the letter.

"Sounds like someone who wants to help," said Tonks plainly who then sat back down beside Remus, who still was standing up. Moody frowned.

"How does he know where these Horcruxes are? Is a Death Eater turned spy?" Snape then stepped forward toward the table with his hands behind his back.

"I am going to investigate that," Sirius then frowned, as he stared at the Horcruxes.

"So...is he spying for us or does he have contacts on the inside?"

"That we do not know, hopefully he will show himself."

"He already has," said Snape coolly, everyone turned to look at him with surprise.

"You have seen him?" asked Arthur. Snape nodded, his dark eyes looking toward Dumbledore. In the recent weeks between Death Eater and Order meetings he had to spilt his time between the two. He hardly had time to meet with Dumbledore privately.

"Whoever this guy is, I saw him at a distance. He landed, accidentally, into a Death Eater meeting. Idiot." said Snape, snorted. The idiot nearly got himself killed; yet he had to admit, this guy knew

how to fight. Yet he saw everything from a distance and by the time he got to the action, the Phoenix had stunned him and he was gone. Leaving several Death Eaters severely injured.

"When? Where?" said Dumbledore sharply. Snape sighed, why now?

"Two days ago, in a field in Surrey." Snape then backed into a corner to take himself out of the conversation. Dumbledore then gave him a look that said, 'Do tell'...along with everyone else, Snape gave in.

"It went like this..."

Trees surrounded the field and the grass swished with blow of a cold wind. Several Death Eaters were already in a circle whispering amongst themselves. Snape Apparated at a distance from the Death Eaters, he pulled his hood up over his head. His wand was tight in his hand, he was always armed at these meetings just incase...

"Snape, you made it," said one Death Eater coolly to him as he approached them. Suddenly behind Snape came another crack of someone Apparating. Snape quickly pulled his hood lower, everyone who should have been here, was. Wands came out and pointed in the direction of the crack. As the tall grass swayed, they could see in the distance a figure dressed in black. Who this was, they had no idea.

The figure was dressed fully in black; silver gleamed at the edges on his robes and sleeves, his hood low over his face. Snape heard the figure swear a number of choice words under his breath.

"Who are you?" cried Malfoy, "Identify yourself now, or we will kill you!" The figure had his wand in his hand, but he did not raise it. He began to laugh, a small laugh that made Snape freeze. This person, was no Death Eater, was he laughing because he landed in his death?

"Kill me?" shouted the figure, "I think not Malfoy," Malfoy was hooded and masked; yet he jerked with surprise, how did he know his name?

"I demand to know who you are!" screamed Malfoy, his voice shaking with fear now. The figure crossed his arms and from what Snape could see of his face, he was smiling.

"I am the Phoenix!" he cried, Snape felt his mind whirl. He knew all of the code names and alias of the Order members and that did not ring a bell with him. Whoever he was, he was brave.

"The Phoenix?" spat Bellatrix, "Then are you one of Dumbledore's men?" Snape prayed this guy was not stupid and would say no. If anything they would torture him then let him go if he Apparated here on accident. Then again, who Apparates somewhere on accident? Only beginners. Snape felt his blood run cold, this was a kid! It had to be! He had promised Dumbledore he would do all in power to protect the students of Hogwarts. If this was a student who was trying his hand at Apparating over the summer, he was dead.

The Phoenix then gave the Death Eaters, a flourishing, mocking, bow. The Death Eaters were taken aback, all but for Snape.

"You are correct," Snape felt like slapping himself. This kid was trying to be brave, stupid, but brave...just like...Potter...Snape gritted his teeth as he again reminded himself of his failed promise to Lily. The boy was with her now...Nott smiled as he raised his wand to the boy,

"Then die...Avada Kedavra!" The Phoenix snorted as the green ball of light shot toward him. Snape felt like screaming at the boy to get out of the way, yet he could not blow his cover. Then the boy Apparated away from the ball of death to behind the Death Eaters, shooting a stunning spell and several useful curses at the Death Eaters.

It then turned into a firefight...literally...

Snape could barely tell where the curses were coming from. The kid, for his age, was an excellent dueler, using curses and Apparation as a means to outfox his enemy. He did not kill them; he used curses and hexes that Snape had never seen before. They were able to take down the enemy in his path. He encircled the Death Eaters with a ring of fire. Conjuring a fiery Phoenix that he held on his arm for a moment, not even burning his skin that he set on the Death Eaters. Snape felt a chill run down his spine as he saw

the fire light in dark eyes under the hood, the Phoenix pointed at the Death Eaters behind Snape,

"Get them," he told the fire phoenix, the phoenix then leapt off his arm and flew at the Death Eaters. Snape was not trapped with the others, which seemed odd or lucky to him at the same time. Many were burned by this spell, pretty badly. This kid showed no mercy.

Yet he used one spell that made Snape question this Phoenix's identity. He used the cutting spell that Snape had created. He did not speak the words but Snape knew the damage it could do. The only ones who knew it were Death Eaters and Snape himself. Who was this kid?

In all, the Phoenix took down six Death Eaters on his own. When the last had fallen to the ground, he turned to Snape. Snape would not fight him. He was just a kid! The Phoenix turned to look at Snape then raised his wand.

"Sorry," Snape froze, he was apologizing to him! As the stunning spell hit him he wondered why he was saying 'Sorry' to him...unless...he knew him...

"Interesting..." said Dumbledore, everyone else sat in silence.

"That kid knows what he is doing," said Moody, "I'm glad he's on our side."

"Just...who is he?" asked Remus. "It was if he knew Snape...how?" They all had a lot to think about within a short space of time. The clock then rang two o'clock in the morning. With that the weary members went their separate ways. Leaving only Dumbledore and Snape in the kitchen.

"We have must to discuss," said Dumbledore under his breath. With that the two used the fireplace to Floo themselves back to Hogwarts. With the letters and Horcruxes in a box under Dumbledore's arm.

The Headmaster's office was quiet at this time of night; the portraits were asleep, snoring in their frames. Dumbledore walked over to his desk, settling the things along the desk. He then pulled out two things from his desk that Snape could not see what they were.

Dumbledore then settled into his chair behind the desk and gestured for Snape to take a seat.

"Quite an interesting day isn't it?" asked Dumbledore, his eyes twinkling as he watched his spy's eyes flash with annoyance.

"Revealing those Horcruxes was very dangerous, Dumbledore," Dumbledore gave a sad smile. It was a risk telling the others for if someone tortured them or looked into their minds they could see they knew about Voldemort's Horcruxes. Once that was found out, all hell would break loose and the Order would lose any hope of destroying the remaining five. He was going to tell this solely to Harry but with his death...or was it?

"It is necessary, especially with this Phoenix. If he is our ally, of course he has shown that by destroying and giving us the Horcruxes."

"I just wonder why he told me he was sorry..." snorted Snape. Dumbledore smiled as Fawkes came down from his perch and landed on his shoulder.

"Maybe he knows you, a former student," Snape rounded on him, his eyes flashing. A student, was he out of his mind?

"I didn't even speak when he was around, how could he recognize me with my hood down?" Dumbledore sighed as he petted Fawkes who gave Snape an odd look. Snape glared back at the bird.

"Have you checked amongst the Death Eaters? Have there been any young people joining?" Snape shook his head, they both knew of the only person who had joined the Death Eaters under age twenty-five and that was Draco Malfoy. "Have you done as I have asked, checking if the other Death Eaters knew about the Horcruxes?"

Snape stood up and began to pace the floor. He had done so, at risk of having someone catching him invading their minds. No, they had no idea what a Horcrux was or the existence of one, even one of Voldemort's.

"None, no one knows of what they are, not even Bellatrix who was Voldemort's right hand...woman. Not even she knows," Dumbledore

nodded that proved his point if Malfoy had known the diary he gave Ginny Weasley was a Horcrux, his Master's Horcrux, he would not have given it to her, no.

"Then who is this guy, it's as if he can get into the Dark Lord's mind. I mean you know where they are but only tonight have you told anyone but me..." Snape went on raging, pacing.

"Unless he can, see into Voldemort's mind." Snape stopped pacing, to look at the Headmaster. The Dark Lord used Occlumency; he had used it since he was a student at Hogwarts himself! The only person alive who could get into Voldemort's mind was Dumbledore, yet still the Dark Lord guarded his mind with a steel will.

"No one can see into the Dark Lord's mind, maybe you, but no one can!" snapped Snape as he turned to look at the old man. What in the world was he getting at? Dumbledore then met his eyes,

"We both now someone who can...Harry..." Snape froze, Potter? Potter was dead more than ten people had seen Potter fall through the Veil to his death. The old man had finally fallen off his rocker. He was too wrapped around Potter that he believed that Potter was alive.

"Potter? You have lost your mind, Albus..." Dumbledore then smiled, his eyes had that old spark. "Do you have proof? Or have you lost it? Potter's friends, Moody, Lupin, Black, Granger, the Weasleys, Longbottom, Lovegood, they all saw Potter fall through. What in your right mind tells you he is alive?" Dumbledore pushed aside the box to reveal three objects that he had removed from his desk earlier.

On Dumbledore's desk sat the diary Horcrux that had been turned open to show writing on a page, a small slip of paper with writing on it and a glowing orb, the Prophecy. The Prophecy that Potter had disappeared with when he fell through the Veil.

"These were left on my desk along with the diadem Horcrux, the Prophecy in the case where the sword was. This was after our discussion with the Weasleys' the night Harry died." Dumbledore pushed them forward. Snape leaned in and read the messages on the diary and on the paper. They were signed by Potter and in

Potter's handwriting. The boy had mentioned that he had taken the sword to use it to destroy the Horcruxes. What in God's name?

"Surprising isn't?" asked Dumbledore as Snape gawked at him in surprise and horror, "I nearly had a heart attack seeing it myself..."

The bell rang three o'clock in the morning as Dumbledore took the winding stairs to his office. Harry had been dead for four hours now...and it was all his fault. If he had not tried to keep his distance from the boy, taught him Occlumency himself Harry would have never have gone into the Department of Mysteries. Seeing the pain, anger and betrayal in Sirius' eyes reminded him that he had failed Sirius again. Seeing the tears of Harry's friends, they were too young to see death. Dumbledore knew what it could do to people, what it did to Harry. He had failed the entire Wizarding world. All hope was lost...

But most of all, he failed Harry. He had been trusted with Harry's safe keeping. Yet the thing that crushed him the most is that Harry trusted Dumbledore with all of his heart. What had he felt as he fell into the Veil? That Dumbledore failed him? Did he hate him? He remembered the small, timid eleven year old who walked into the Great Hall for the first time. Fear and wonder in those green eyes. He had grown far beyond Dumbledore ever imagined; he took on Voldemort again and again. Taking on tasks and heartbreaks that could break the strongest man.

As he entered his office a commotion and shouts of the portraits of Heads before him called his attention away from Harry's death. It pulled him from his grief and sorrow as they shouted and pointed,

"It's gone, Dumbledore!"

"Someone stole it!"

Dumbledore raised a hand and they fell silent, despite that they were twitching in their frames.

"Now, one at a time please, what is going on?" Many hands then pointed to a glass case where the Sword of Godric Gryffindor was kept, the case was empty. All but for a glowing orb.

"We left the office, all of us...to spread the news about the castle, when we came back it was gone!" Dumbledore stood there shocked. No one but himself and the teachers knew the password to the Headmaster's office and there was only one entrance.

"You were all gone?" he asked them, they all nodded. Gossiping away, not one of them saw the person who had taken the sword. But why? Was it to symbolize Voldemort's victory over Harry? Slytherin vs. Gryffindor? Very few knew of the sword's existence, many thought it was an object lost to time. Dumbledore then began to walk toward the case, the sword was gone. But in its place was a glowing orb. Pulling out his wand he used a number of complex spells to determine the object.

It was a Prophecy orb from the Department of Mysteries...

This was what the Order was guarding, trying to keep out of the hands of Voldemort, the weapon. With a swish of his wand the Prophecy began to reveal its contents, it was the Prophecy. The prophecy that determined Harry's and Voldemort's fates. He felt breathless; Harry was in possession of the Orb when he fell through the Veil. Yet here it was. Impossible. It was then he noticed a small piece of paper right next to the orb. Dumbledore read it:

Sorry, Professor. I need the sword to destroy the Horcruxes. I'll return it as soon as I can.

Harry

Dumbledore didn't understand, Harry was dead...or was he? Harry had a record about a mile long of escaping life or death situations. Did he escape the Veil? He then waved his wand again. A ghostly shape of Harry Potter appeared in the middle of the room. He watched as he entered the office, used the sword to smash a diadem which hissed and smoked. Retrieve Tom Riddle's diary and wrote in it. Out of the corner of his eye did he see the smashed diadem and the diary. Harry then placed the sword in his belt and placed the orb in the case before leaving.

The spell had shown him that Harry was the last person in this office...Alive...Harry was alive. Dumbledore smiled, hope was not lost,

"Good job, Harry," He then looked at the objects on his desk, in Riddle's diary he had left another note:

Professor,

The search begins.

Harry

Harry knew of the Horcruxes? He knew where they were? He had been planning to teach the boy this term about them and together, with the help from the Order, find them and destroy them. Had Voldemort accidentally let Harry into his mind and Harry understood what that meant? The boy was smart and when it involved Voldemort, Harry was more than willing to find out what was going on. He had proved so before. Dumbledore had a hunch that Riddle's diary was a Horcrux; it was the first real clue to his long-standing theory about Voldemort and Horcruxes. Did Harry figure all this out on his own, or did Voldemort accidentally give the boy the objects and their locations?

Dumbledore did not know.

He then examined the broken diadem. It was made of silver, diamonds and sapphires, the colors of Ravenclaw. He had suspected the diadem to be one of seven Horcruxes Voldemort created. It was spilt in half and edges melted and charred. With a few swishes of his wand he discovered that it was harmless.

Dumbledore then stood there, could this all be a trick? How could it be? Everything pointed to Harry being alive. Yet he had to be careful, all this could be proof. The orb was proof, yet he had to be careful. This could be used to raise everyone's hopes then crush them beyond repair. No...he'd keep this to himself now, maybe tell Minerva and Severus later but not now. Everything would continue on, within a few day's Harry's death would be announced. But hopefully by then, he would have more clues to this mystery.

Yet his heart felt lighter now, if Harry was alive...

Dumbledore wanted to believe, desperate to believe that Harry was alive. Yet, like Snape, he believed it to be a trick. Trick to raise the hopes of the light side of the war then crush them when the truth

was Harry was dead. Until...Sirius came in one desperate afternoon to his office with an album and Remus right behind him trying to talk him out of something...

"Sirius! Sirius, stop!" cried Remus as the two former Marauders scrambled into Dumbledore's office breathless. Albus smiled, Sirius was getting his energy back. Though, the mournful look was still in his eyes and face. Remus looked terrible, Harry's death was hard on them. He wished he could share his suspicions with them that James' son was alive, but alas, he could not. There were so many unanswered questions and more proof needed to be gathered before he told anyone else.

Stumbling into the office Sirius was clutching what looked like a photo album. What in the world was this about?

"Remus, Sirius, what do I owe the pleasure?" Sirius held up a finger as he sucked in several more breathes before he spoke, slamming the photo album on the desk.

"Last night, I was looking at this old photo album I found in my room. I wanted...I wanted to show it to Harry this summer but..." He began to flip through picture after picture of the Marauders, James, Lily and an infant Harry, "In the morning I found on a sheet of paper on my table was a message from Harry, and I put it in here to keep it safe. I swear to God..." Remus crossed his arms,

"Sirius you were drunk as hell. Harry may have wrote the message during Christmas," Sirius then rounded on him, angry,

"THIS WAS NOT THERE LAST NIGHT!" He finally found the page, shaking with rage as tears shined in his eyes. There, stuffed into the photo album was a worn piece of paper with Harry's handwriting. Dumbledore felt like smiling, it was another clue! Yet he looked at Sirius and saw the anger in his eyes.

"Someone...is playing with me...us! Trying to make it look like Harry is..." He then turned away as tears spilled down his face. Dumbledore's heart went out to Sirius, Sirius loved his godson dearly. As much as Dumbledore did. Remus placed a hand on his shoulder,

"We are afraid someone is trying to make it seem that Harry is alive. And we, we cannot stand this slander. How they got into the house without the wards going off..."

"We want this investigated!" screamed Sirius, his eyes burning with hate. They believed that an Order member was playing tricks on them. Dumbledore settled back into his chair, trying to smile. This clearly was a 'cheer up' message for Sirius that Harry left; yet Sirius did not believe it. Once Dumbledore got his evidence Sirius would believe.

"Are you sure, this not a message Harry had left during Christmas?" Sirius shook his head.

"All the parchment on that table was new! I could not have mixed it up. If Harry left me a message like that I would have noticed it," With an inward smile Dumbledore promised he would have it investigated. Well done, Harry...

"This could be a trick," said Snape instantly, it smelled bad to him. Someone trying to get everyone's hopes up when Potter was far beyond help. In Heaven, Paradise, whatever you call it with his parents...with Lily... Dumbledore then stood up and began to pace the floor.

"That's what I thought myself after I went over the facts, yet no one but the teachers and myself knows the password to this office," Snape snorted, someone might have overheard it. One of his Slytherin students, the son or daughter of a Death Eater may have got a late night owl...Malfoy hated Potter and would have found it quite amusing to play with the Headmaster and Potter's friends heads.

"Maybe one of my students snuck in here, because their father sent them a late night owl. Draco, maybe," Dumbledore shook his head, this was Harry's handwriting, he knew Draco could not fake Harry's handwriting, he rarely saw it. Besides, the child was probably enwrapped with his new mission as a new Death Eater: to murder Dumbledore himself.

"No, this is Harry's handwriting," said Dumbledore, gesturing to the pieces of paper with Potter's writing. "Besides, I believe our young friend is busy with his new task," Snape rolled his eyes. The Dark

Lord believed the easiest ways to kill Dumbledore was by the hand of a student. Snape had warned Dumbledore on day one. There was no way Dumbledore could die now, Potter was gone, whether the old man believed it or not. Besides Draco...kill Dumbledore? Pssh! The boy was a spoiled brat who thought being a Death Eater was great fun, but he would never stomach murder. He was weak.

"He'll never do it," said Snape as he looked over the notes left by 'Potter'. Dumbledore chuckled; Snape and the other teachers would not let him die. Nor did he want to. Dumbledore watched as belief came into Snape's face. "This...is...impossible...How in God's name...Merlin...how did he escape the Veil when so many have died because of it?" he breathed. Dumbledore's eyes flashed then, Snape believed...just a little bit. In return Dumbledore shook his head.

He had no idea how Harry had escaped the Veil. The boy had the luck of getting out of life or death situations before. Maybe that luck helped him escape, only God knows.

"I don't have the answer to that dear boy. We will have to ask Harry when we see him again—"

"If we see him again!" inputted Snape with a sneer, the boy was keeping distance from them for a reason.

"The point is, Severus....Harry is alive. Who else can see into Voldemort's mind? Harry's connection with Voldemort's mind may have let him see into the deep recesses of Voldemort's mind and learned of the Horcruxes on his own. I was going to give him private lessons about these Horcruxes this school year," He gestured to a glass case that held glowing vials of memories that Dumbledore had collected over the years to back up his theory of Horcruxes.

Snape glared at them, this still had to be proved with physical evidence. He knew that, Dumbledore knew that. These pieces of paper, the Prophecy and the missing sword were some evidence. Though, deep in the recesses of Snape's mind he wanted to believe the proof before him. That Potter was alive, there still was a chance for him to keep his promise to Lily.

"Then why not address the letters as himself? Why the code name?"

"To one: ensure if the letter fell into the wrong hands he would not proclaiming to his enemies that he was alive. Two: to scare the Death Eaters, what could scare them more than by using the symbol of the Order?" Snape shook his head; the boy was making a statement using the symbol of the Order and of Dumbledore himself. The old man was too modest to say so.

"So...if you think he is alive, then where is he?" Dumbledore shrugged his shoulders, Snape rolled his eyes.

"He is clearly in hiding, searching for the Horcruxes," That did not help one bit. "I believe we have already the evidence that he is alive. I believe our friend the Phoenix and Harry are one and the same," Snape looked at Dumbledore again as if he lost his mind.

"You believe the Phoenix is Potter?" Dumbledore nodded.

"How else could he know what the Horcruxes were and how to find them?" Yet...it sounded plausible, these Horcruxes had been found by someone who knew where they were and how to destroy them. The only likely explanation was Potter. No Death Eater knew about them if they did they would protect them. Though Snape didn't want to believe it, it was the only logical explanation.

"Are you going to let him do this alone?" snapped Snape. In years before the old man had bent over backwards to ensure the boy's safety, now would he let the savior of the Wizarding world roam free destroying Dark Arts objects on his own?

Dumbledore sighed, "We must. If we try to locate him, he might run from us. He has a reason to stay away from us. If it to keep his existence a secret or to protect us, I have no idea. All I know is that he contacted us, he chose the form of communication with us. If we try to find him we might blow his secret wide open. Clearly he wants to do this on his own and I will respect that. Harry, will choose when he wants to contact us and when he will reveal himself."

"I still will have to see it with my own eyes," That was the last thing Snape said before leaving the office. He nearly got bold over by McGonagall coming up the stairs. She clearly was on a mission, even if it was early in the morning. He had learned long ago to stay out of her way when she was in that type of mind.

"Minerva," said Dumbledore brightly as she entered, her hat askew. "What do I owe the pleasure at this early in the morning?"

"We need to plan something for when the new school term starts. I was discussing this with the other professors and they agree with me on this Albus. We will not hear anything...rude or offensive made against Harry," she then stood there, flustered. Dumbledore smiled at her, he admired her when it came to her Gryffindors. He understood instantly what she was talking about. Yet, she explained it anyway, "The Slytherins will surely use Harry's death to get at his friends. I will not...see Harry's name slandered against. Especially Draco Malfoy, the boy will gloat this till Kingdom come. And I...I will not want the other students to be...upset over this..."

"I understand," He could not tell her that he believed that Harry was alive. He wished he could but if what Severus said to be true, it was all a trick and the Phoenix was someone else, he would not want to crush her spirit again. Nor the spirits and hopes of Harry's friends. No, this would, for now stay between him and Severus. "We will come up with a plan before term starts."

With a nod and a smile of gratitude, she left Dumbledore alone in his office. He was very glad the portraits were asleep; we wouldn't want this news to get out. If the Phoenix was Harry, he needed him to stay safe, at whatever the cost. For he was still the hope and the Chosen One of the Wizarding world. He knew Harry would destroy all of the Horcruxes...all of them...

That was the only guilty, gut-wrenching secret Dumbledore carried, for if Harry did not know...It would be heart-wrenching to tell him...but even more so...

To watch him die...

Chapter 16: The Graveyard

A loud crack echoed around a sullen, grey graveyard. In the middle of the miles of graves stood Harry Potter as the Phoenix, wand out and ready to fire. It was dark and Harry lighted his wand as he walked slowly amongst the graves. He hated graveyards, ever since he was a child. Dudley and his gang had chased a six-year-old Harry into a graveyard and left him there, leaving Harry thinking they had chased him into the graveyard. Harry remembered the fear as the cold and the fog drifted over the graves.

Harry remembered wondering if the dead would rise from their graves as they did in horror movies. To pull the six year old down six feet under to die. Harry shivered. He remembered that he stayed there until he was dragged home by his aunt and locked in his cupboard for two days. That childhood fear was heightened with Voldemort's return.

In this very graveyard...

Harry heard a twig snap behind him, he whirled around ready to strike. In the wand light he could see it was only a rabbit. Harry winced, his ribs were still sore after several run-ins with Death Eaters.

They had all been his fault.

He had been trying to Apparate to the graveyard where the Riddle House and the old family home of Voldemort's mother and where the ring Horcrux was. He found that it was harder to find that graveyard than any other place. Maybe it was because he has pushed that memory back in fear and horror. Harry had seen a fellow student, Cedric Diggory die before his eyes and saw Voldemort return. Even though the memory came back easily in nightmares, it was hard for him to recover on his own. Maybe it was because he was scared to go back to that place which so much terror and fear had instilled itself in Harry's heart.

So for days Harry had tried to Apparate to the graveyard, yet like many a rookie wizard trying to Apparate from place to place, he failed. His Apparating skills were good, but still needed work. It took a wizard two to three years to Apparate accurately. Every time Harry tried to concentrate he would always land in the thick of Death

Eaters. The image of Voldemort and his Death Eaters would spring into his head when he tried to Apparate to the graveyard. He then found that he had landed amongst the Death Eaters. More than once he had to fight them off, not killing them even though he wanted to at times as memories of his past life flashed before his eyes. Yet he left many a Death Eater injured and in pain.

Finally, after nearly two weeks Harry and finally did it. He finally was able to Apparate to the graveyard. Now that he was here, he was on a mission. He needed to find the Horcrux and he needed to find it now. June was coming to an end and he was trying to keep his hunt for the Horcruxes rolling. He wondered if the Order was wondering where he was. It had been weeks since he had sent them a letter. The only way for him to know if Dumbledore believed him was to see if the ring Horcrux was in its hiding place.

"I'm about to find out..." he whispered. His grip tightened on his wand, the light shining before him like a beckon of hope. The light passed over graves, his eyes watching for familiar names and for the one grave that started it all.

He finally found it...Tom Riddle Senior's grave...

Harry's breath caught as he saw the words written on the stone, the stone where he was tied up as he struggled to free himself as he watched Voldemort come back to his true form. The pain was terrible as he tried to fight to stop everything that was happening from happening. God...it was coming back...

The whirl of blue and white of the Portkey pulled him back. They landed hard on the cold ground his leg throbbing with pain...

Harry tried to gain his balance again as his head spun. He realized they were away from Hogwarts, from the Tournament, from reality. As his head cleared he felt the warm weight of Cedric's hand on his shoulder. He wondered where they were too. Wands came out at Cedric's request.

Then Harry's scar exploded with pain. Such pain he had never felt before, it lanced his scar like acid or a white-hot poker. He remembered feeling something bad was going to happen. If his scar hurt this badly Voldemort was close, very close. He remembered

biting his lip until he drew blood with the first pain then, screaming at Cedric to get out. He had to leave or else...

"Kill the spare! Avada Kedavra!" A flash of green from between his fingers, the thump of a body. Opening his eyes and seeing Cedric dead on the ground before him, grey eyes staring at nothing. The pain...the pain...As he was tied to the headstone, waiting for the baby-like Voldemort to drown. The bones, the flesh, Harry's blood...

The Death Eaters, Voldemort talking about the night Harry's parents were murdered...Teasing Harry...

The duel....

His parents...Cedric...

It happened and he could not stop it. Yet it did and he blamed himself for everything that happened. Tears bottled in his eyes that he blinked away; he couldn't keep his mind in the past. Hell, he had come from the past. The present and the future was the only thing that mattered now.

Harry slowly made his way toward a large, old house in the distance. If he remembered correctly that large house was the Riddle house, where Voldemort murdered his father and grandparents. When Dumbledore showed Harry the memories in the Pensieve that a little ways away from Riddle house was the abandoned shack where Voldemort's mother used to live with her father and brother. As Harry walked amongst the graves toward the house his thoughts turned to the memories of Voldemort he had seen in the Pensieve. Voldemort once said that he and Harry were similar. Voldemort said this when he battled Tom Riddle in the Chamber of Secrets.

They were similar...orphaned one by the loss of a mother and the abandonment of a father, the other's murdered. Both with bad childhoods, one with horrible relatives that hated everything about him and the other in an orphanage. They found refuge in Hogwarts. Yet Voldemort was evil, evil to his core. He knew nothing about love and friendship. He only cared about power. The only deference was that Harry had loved and still loved. Love, was the reason he was doing this.

Harry was now on the grounds of the house and he slowly walked around the house. His eyes then landed on the dirt road that led to the house. As Harry walked along the dirt road it was a pathway of brambles and thorns that caught his robes and cut his face. He was glad he wore gloves; they ensured his hands would be useful. Finally he made it to the house, the door was closed. That was a good sign. Harry took a deep breath and entered the small shack, praying that Dumbledore truly believed him.

Chapter 17: The Ring

The shack was old and decaying with each passing minute. The wind pasted through the broken windows and gaping openings in the wooden walls. The wind whistled reminding Harry of a haunted house. The dust was everywhere and rose in patches under Harry's feet that choked him as it rose around his nose and mouth. Coughing Harry, slapped his free hand over his nose and mouth.

The house had upturned tables and chairs, the bed had collapsed, the sheets gone leaving the mattress. Rusting pots and pans lay about the house. The house was deathly quiet, only the floorboards that creaked under Harry's feet made any noise. Breathing through his fingers, Harry held his breath. The dust was so thick he was choking on it and could hardly breathe. Now, where was that Horcrux?

Walking around the small house Harry tried to remember where Dumbledore had said he found the Horcrux. Harry's lungs burned for air and he released the air, sucking in another breath. He could only hold his breath for sixty seconds apiece. He paced the floor he knew it was under the floorboards, but which ones? It would take hours to take apart the floor. Pulling out his wand he whispered,

"Ring Horcrux, Point Me," At first the wand spun in his hand between himself and the floor. Harry sighed, how did he know this would happen? Finally the wand pointed down at the floor to his left. As he got closer the wand pointed down at that floor. It was here. Harry then threw himself onto the floor and began to rip open the floorboards. The dust and splinters from the floorboards flew in his face. He had to blink several times to get the dust out of his watering eyes.

After several blinks, coughs and waving the dust out of his face, did the dust clear. Harry could not see the gaping hole he tore open in the floorboards. As he lit his wand he could see the sparkle of something through the hole. Unwilling to touch it for fear of the curse placed on it Harry waved his wand,

"Wingardium Leviosa!" Out of the hole came a black box, it shimmered, probably made from some type of polished stone, like onyx. With his wand Harry lowered the box on the floor with a flick of his wand opened the lid. Inside, cushioned by green velvet was the

Ring Horcrux. A gold band with a shiny black stone, Harry could make out the markings of the Resurrection Stone. Harry then reached around for the Gryffindor sword.

Harry had been careful not to bring out the sword, leaving it at Godric's Hollow and would bring the Horcrux back to his parents' house to be destroyed. In Harry's mind it was both irony and revenge. Irony that Harry was destroying Voldemort's Horcruxes in the house where he killed his parents, created Harry his enemy and his Horcrux. Revenge...well that was easy, revenging his parents' death, the deaths that Harry had seen in past, for everything.

Yet this time, Harry had to bring the sword. He did not want to even touch the ring that carried the curse that slowly killed his mentor. So Harry had to bring the sword along. Harry knelt before the box holding the ring and taped the tip of the blade against the stone. A hiss then came from the ring, menacing and cruel. Harry ignored it, then brought the sword down hard on the ring. With a piercing scream, the tip of the blade penetrated the stone, causing it to crack. Then all was silent.

Harry's ears were ringing from the scream yet he remained still and quiet, listening for footsteps. He knew there was a village nearby and if anyone heard the scream it would sound like as if someone was being murdered. Well, someone was being murdered; a piece of Voldemort's soul...Yet Harry waited and heard no one. Putting the sword back into his belt he reached with a trembling hand to pick up the ring. The metal was cold, the gleaming black stone glaring up at him. Harry wondered if he should take the stone with him.

"No...I don't need it..." he whispered, he would mail it to Dumbledore when he got back to Godric's Hollow. Hopefully Hedwig would be there, she had been visiting him during the night once a week on every Friday, so hopefully...

No, he did not need it. Last time he had been scared to walk to his death, he needed the support of his parents, godfather and Remus. But if he used the Stone it would only make him guilty of lying to his parents. Besides he was not afraid to die this time. Once he was dead, anyone could kill Voldemort. This time all of his friends and loved ones would live, he could go to his grave happy and joyful.

He was not scared to die this time...

So he pocketed the ring and stood up, the sword scrapping against the wooden floor. He stood there in the old shack; this is where it all began. If Voldemort had not been born...Well, there was nothing he could do about that. With a swish of his cloak and dust, Harry left the shack, never to return. Harry shivered as he walked into the graveyard again. He did not like this one bit. As he walked amongst the graves he found Tom Riddle Senior's grave again.

Did Tom Riddle Senior see from wherever he was what his son was doing? The killing, the wars...families ripped apart. Did he wish had been there for his wife and son? Instead of abandoning them, if he took care of them as a husband, father, a man would history be different? Harry did not know, all he knew is that Merope Gaunt fed the man a Love Potion that made him love her. Did Merope, see what her son was doing and wish she had not died in childbirth? That she raised her son to be a better person? Who knows? It was like Harry and his parents. Had they raised him, would things be different?

Who knows?

As Harry mused, he suddenly heard bangs and crashes that sounded like spells and spells hitting stone. His mind reeled back to that night in the graveyard, in this graveyard as he ran from Voldemort and his Death Eaters, toward Cedric's body and the Cup. Harry's body moved while his mind was still stuck in the past. He curled into a ball behind the tombstone, which still bore the scars from the last time Harry hid behind it. He could not stop shivering as his mind was pulled back to the Third Task, the entire night flashing over his eyes.

"GET THEM!" scream several voices and th crash of spells continued. Harry was finally pulled from his thoughts. He blinked several times to get the tears out of his eyes. Harry turned to see Death Eaters chasing after someone. Harry then began to crawl toward the flashes of spells and the cries of the Death Eaters. Harry had a feeling that some Order members got themselves into a situation. Harry finally crawled to see in the open clearing where Voldemort had been reborn and Harry dueled him. Seven Death Eaters were chasing after two people, yet he could not see them.

"Remus, look out!" he heard a female voice cry out. A familiar voice, it was Tonks' voice. Harry felt himself freeze, he couldn't move...

"Careful Dora!" he heard Remus shout. Harry then ran toward the voices. Praying this was a joke, a dream. Yet it was not.

In a circle of Death Eaters stood Remus and Tonks, hand in hand wands out. Harry would have been happy to see Tonks and Remus hand in hand. Their relationship was developing faster than it had in the past. He wondered if Tonks had helped comfort Remus with his death as she had with Sirius' but this time the relationship was deeper. But his heart nearly froze; they had got themselves into a life or death situation.

He was reminded once again that no matter how much he tried to control events here, in this time, he could not. But he had to save them; he could not let them die, even if it might mean revealing everything to save them.

Chapter 18: Suspicions

Harry swore under his breath, keeping his hood low. Even though the Death Eaters, nor Tonks and Remus could see him, it was now a habit. What was he going to do? He could not let the Death Eaters kill them! He had to fight them, all of them. He had promised to save everyone, those who had died in his original time and those who had not. The only person who would die would be him...and Voldemort...

Gritting his teeth, Harry surveyed the odds against him. Hermione had the brain to make up strategy and create plans of attack, yet she was not here. Seven Death Eaters, one Harry and Remus and Tonks. He could go in spells flying and demand they leave immediately, hoping the shock of seeing the Phoenix they would leave. His name and deeds were spreading terror amongst the Death Eaters and causing Voldemort to put a price on his head, while the light side cheered his name and relished in his victories. But if he knew Tonks and Remus well enough, which he did, they would not leave a fellow ally in battle.

If they considered him an ally.

Harry was afraid of fighting in front of them. What if they recognized him, a movement or spell that screamed, 'I am Harry Potter'? They would take him with them and his mission would be over. Unless Dumbledore made them let him go. Fat chance! Sirius and Remus would handcuff him to either one of them for the remainder of the war! Ron and Hermione would scream, yell, and cry...pleading for him to come back with them to school. Mrs. Weasley would sob then ground him, along with Sirius, for the rest of his natural life. Which would not be long anyway...Harry bit his lip, he had no choice, he pulled his hood low and pulled out his wand.

"On the count of three...one...two...thr—" But before he could move, he heard a laugh, a high pitched laugh that made the hair on the back of his neck stand up. It was Bellatrix. He could see her move toward the couple, wand out.

"Well, well niece, I have not seen you before, but I know who you are," Tonks' brow furrowed as her pink hair slowly started to change to violent shade of scarlet.

"Bitch..." she swore, "You killed Harry! And now I'm gonna—" Remus gripped her hand tight to cut her off. He pulled her behind him protectively. That small gesture made Harry flush, yep things had progressed quickly with these two! Good!

Bellatrix, laughed again, clapping her hands like a small child in play. She walked toward Tonks, close enough that her wand was inches from her nose.

"My, my niece, did your mother not teach you to respect your elders?" Tonks' nostrils flared as she spat in Bellatrix's face. Bellatrix, staggered back, wiping the spit of her face as if it was the foulest substance known to man. Harry smiled, way to go Tonks!

"I don't respect you! I never will, my mother taught me that! You psychopathic bitch, with your pure blood crap! Trailing the cape of some damned ego-mantic killer who is the scum of the earth!" she screamed at Bellatrix, her dark eyes flaring. Remus pulled Tonks behind him fully so that Bellatrix could not see her. Bellatrix raised her wand at Tonks with the insult thrown at her master, yet she was behind Remus.

"Don't you dare, insult my master, brat!" hissed Bellatrix, yet in order to kill Tonks she had to go through Remus. Remus' wand was pointed straight at her heart. A light smile came to his lips.

"Sirius, would not like it if I killed you, Bellatrix. He was so looking forward to getting his revenge for Harry's death by killing you, but if I must..." his voice was calm, almost light hearted, yet the anger was written plain on his face as Harry could see the eyes of Moony, the werewolf, come out. Bellatrix laughed, she spun around so Harry saw her ugly face; she was not wearing her mask and hood. Clearly proud to be in the open as a loyal servant to Voldemort. Why not? She had gone to Azkaban for him.

"How is my dear cousin?" she asked playing with her wand, the Death Eaters sniggered, "Still weeping and bemoaning the little Potter brat? O how I would love to see that!" She then turned to her face to the Death Eaters and put on a sad face,

"Oh Harry, Harry oh how I have failed you..." A bile rose in Harry's mouth as his anger rose, how dare she mock Sirius! There was a bang and Bellatrix stumbled, cutting her pantomime short. Remus

had his wand pointed right at her and with a twisted smile that reminded Harry of the looks he had seen of the younger faces of James, Remus and Sirius. The Marauder Smile.

"Ooops..." he said. Bellatrix looked ready to hex him, but instead she straightened herself up and an evil smile came over her face, as she paced before her prisoners. Harry should attack, now, but he was so angry that he could not move.

"Yes, yes, I was rewarded handsomely for the brat's death. My lord was so pleased!" Remus moved forward at her, his wand raised at her face.

"Remus, no!" whispered Tonks, pulling him back beside her, her face set in a calm look of an Auror yet, her eyes were fearful.

"How you gloat Bella," murmured Malfoy, he was masked. Remus smiled,

"So, Malfoy, too scared to show your face to us?" Malfoy jerked back then ripped off his mask, giving them a mock bow then with a twitch of his hand all of the Death Eaters, save one, removed their mask.

"Of course, half-breed, we'll show you our faces. Since they are the last ones you'll ever see," Avery's eyes looked to the still masked Death Eater and scowled,

"You too Severus, show them who you really are," Harry had a hunch that the masked Death Eater was Snape, still playing the role of a spy. Harry instantly tightened his shields around his mind. Snape was going to get a nasty surprise to find his mind was well guarded. Tonks and Remus took a step back, wands raised at Snape.

Harry snorted; they both had shocked looks on their faces. Whether this was act of pretend shock to see Snape as a spy for the dark side or if they truly were shock that he revealed himself to them. Snape took off his mask with a gleam in his eyes.

"Lupin, Tonks," he said curtly, yet there was a smug smile on his face. That worried Harry. He knew that Snape hated all of the Marauders, even though Remus barely did anything to Snape, since

that was his father and godfathers' job, yet Remus let it happen. So he hated Remus too. Was Snape going to hurt them, as payback for all those years ago?

It would not surprise him in the least!

He would just say that he was forced to because of his role as a spy. Bastard.

"We trusted you," spat Tonks, she was putting on a good show.

"Oh really Nymphadora—" Tonks' hair flared red again, "Why should I stay loyal to you? I do not know you well enough to care and as for Lupin here..." Snape's eyes glinted, Remus flushed, and he knew what he was thinking. "Lupin and his friends caused me a lifetime of trouble at school so why should I care?"

"Kill them!" cried several Death Eaters as Snape circled around them.

"No," said Malfoy coolly, "If they have caused you so much trouble, Snape then why not torture them, for revenge?" Snape smiled at the idea. Harry swallowed hard; Snape was going to do it! Spy or not, ally or not he was going to do it! For revenge!

"An excellent idea, Malfoy," said Snape as he turned to look at Remus and Tonks again. Remus' eyes flashed, without assistance they were dead and he knew it. He'd let Snape torture him, he deserved it. He let James and Sirius many a time prank and hex Snape when he had the power to stop them, but he did not. He was afraid of losing his friends if he did so. Tonks was innocent; she was not even born when this took place...If she could just get away...

"Snape, torture me only, please," asked Remus holding his hands up to show he was not going to attack, "She was not part of that, please, only me..." Tonks and Harry gasped at the same time. Remus was going to give himself up? NO!

"Remus, no!" cried Tonks rushing toward him, arms out. Remus held a hand out and she stopped.

"NO! You were not part of this...animosity between Snape and I, you stay out of it!" Tonks froze, tears in her eyes. Bellatrix noticed this and sneered at Tonks,

"You love him don't you?" Tonks and Remus' faces flushed, Tonks whipped her head around with anger in her eyes at Bellatrix.

"That is none of your business!" Bellatrix smiled.

"This shall be fun. Yes, Severus torture the werewolf and let her watch, then I'll torture her and he'll watch!" Snape's head turned to look at her, something flashed in his eyes.

"Like you tortured the Longbottoms?" Harry felt the pit of his stomach drop out. The Longbottoms, Alice and Frank...Neville's parents. Tortured until they lost their sanity, they now resided at St. Mungo's with no idea of who they are or even who their son is...Harry shut his eyes tight. Neville was the other child that the Prophecy referred to. His parents had denied Voldemort three times and Neville was born one day before Harry. Yet, Harry was chosen and marked instead of Neville, because Neville was a pureblood and Harry was a half-blood, like Voldemort—the bigger threat.

"Yes..." hissed Bellatrix, as she then pointed her wand at Remus as cords bound his wrists together. She then did the same for Tonks. Tonks looked on the edge of tears.

No one was coming, they were going to die.

She sank to her knees, she loved him, and she really did. Their missions for the Order had brought them together. He was shy and thought himself too old and dangerous for her, but she loved him. Tonks had pulled Remus from his deep depression over Harry's death. Harry's death affected everyone, Remus and Sirius the most. They had sworn to watch over the boy since he was a baby and they failed. Tonks spent hours with Remus, pulling him out of the darkness. Slowly, with her, he began to smile and laugh again, so did Sirius. But Tonks knew it would take months even years for both of them to recover from the loss of Harry. Yet, over time, she could see in his eyes that he loved her too.

Snape walked forward, his wand leveled at Remus' chest. He did not flinch nor plead, he looked back at Tonks.

"I love you..." she whispered. Remus flushed, he still had not gotten used to those words. She had confessed her love for him several weeks after Harry's death. She had helped pull him and Sirius from the misery of Harry's death. They had been paired on numerous missions for the Order for the past year, he got to know her. She is funny, smart, resourceful, but very clumsy. She made him laugh. Laugh as hard and even harder than he had in school with the Marauders, with Sirius...with Harry...

Oh how Sirius teased that if he married Tonks they'd be relatives for real. James, Sirius and Remus considered themselves to be brothers in all but blood. Though he told her again and again he was too old and dangerous for her, it was clear she chose him. Just as Lily chose James, as Molly chose Arthur. He accepted that, here and now. For they were about to die...

"I love you too..." Tonks' eyes glowed at those words as tears fell down her face.

"How touching..." sneered Snape as he raised his wand.

Harry leapt to his feet; Snape was going to do it! He was actually going to do it. Harry pointed his wand at Snape and a spell shot out of the end of his wand. No more Mr. Nice Guy! No one was going to hurt his loved ones, not even Snape! Snape's wand leapt from his hand and soared through the sky landing at Nott's feet.

"What the—?" Harry then summoned his fiery phoenix. It was a spell he had found in a book in his parents' room. A fire spell that can take shape and be controlled by the caster. The phoenix leapt from Harry's wand and dove straight at the Death Eaters. With Harry's mental command the phoenix wrapped a ring of fire around Tonks and Remus, then freed them from their bonds.

The Death Eaters cried out, in shock and fear. They backed away from Remus and Tonks who stood in shock. Harry then leapt out from behind the graves, his cloak whirling about his figure. He then starts his usual attack, Apparating and attacking the Death Eaters before they could attack him.

More than once Harry stopped just long enough in front of a Death Eater, for another to take a shot at him. They would shoot a Killing

Curse at Harry but he would duck out of the way, just in time. The curse would then hit the Death Eater behind him. Thus Harry continued until Snape, Malfoy, Bellatrix and Nott were the last remaining Death Eaters. Remus and Tonks stood in shock, unable to raise their wands to help the Phoenix.

Harry then Apparated into the fire circle with Tonks and Remus. He kept his wand pointed at the remaining Death Eaters; he turned to look at them. They looked shocked to see him. His hood was pulled low so they could only see the tip of his nose and the lower part of the face.

"You're—you're the Phoenix..." whispered Tonks, her wand lowering slightly. Remus kept his pointed at Harry's face. Harry smiled, always cautious.

"You are the Phoenix?" cried Nott, looking at his comrades in shock, "Just a child." Harry snorted as he lowered the flames around them slightly. He could see the shock on their faces clearly, he enjoyed that.

"At your service," said Harry with a bow to Remus and Tonks. Harry had lowered the octave of his voice so that it was lower than his own voice. That way they did not recognize his voice. Tonks kept shaking her head, not willing to believe that the Phoenix, the one searching for the Horcruxes, putting himself in this much danger was a child!

"But you are so...young," Harry stood up and angled his body slightly so he could see the Death Eaters and his friends.

"I am nineteen," he lied, with a shrug. Remus stepped forward but Harry held up a hand. "You must leave now, I will take care of them," Remus stood there shocked but shook his head.

"We will not leave you here by yourself," Harry's heart went out to him, but they could not stay.

"I can take care of myself, as you know..." Tonks reached out and touched Remus' arm. He turned to look at her.

"We owe him our lives, Remus. If he wishes for us to leave, then we shall respect his wish," Tonks then turned her dark eyes on Harry; a soft smile came over her lips.

"Are you sure you do not wish for us to stay?" Harry shook his head; he would feel ten times better if they left. So he shook his head and gave them a slight bow.

"Please depart," With a soft nod, Remus grabbed Tonks' hand but he looked like he'd rather stay and fight beside the man who saved them. The look in Remus' eyes made Harry's heart jump, did he see through him? Yet they never got a chance to leave.

"You're not going anywhere!" Bellatrix then shot the Killing Curse at all three of them. They scattered, as Harry removed the ring of fire from around them, they had to run or they'd be sitting ducks! The Killing Curse whooshed over his head, inches from him, that his hood came off from the force.

"Oh man," he whispered as he rolled away then pulled his hood down low over his face again. He leapt to his feet spinning to avert spell after spell. Together the three were able to keep the Death Eaters at bay. It took everything Harry had not to give himself up; he had to remain the Phoenix in their eyes, not Harry.

Luckily he had been practicing a numerous amount of new defensive and offensive spells from the books in his parents' house. Therefore he did not need to use the disarming spells numerous times, only when he needed to. Remus and Tonks had succeeded in killing Nott. Harry knew he could not bring himself to use the Killing Curse, so he let others do it for him, hence the ducking and dodging the curse that would in turn kill Death Eaters.

Out of the corner of his eye Harry saw Snape raise his wand at Remus.

"Oh no you don't!" he murmured under his breath, with a flick of his wand he put Snape into a Body Bind hex. Snape shot him a cold, calculating look. Did he know the truth? Maybe he had that look in his eye when he was trying to establish fact from fiction. Harry raised his shields around his mind if the man would start to probe him with Legilimens.

Weary and out of breath, Malfoy and Bellatrix knew they were outnumbered now, with one look at each other they Apparated, leaving Snape on his own.

"Cowards!" spat Tonks, they had expected them to capture Snape and take him to Dumbledore. Good thing they did not know he was actually spying for Dumbledore. Harry didn't mind them leaving, it showed their true colors. Besides, Tonks and Remus were safe; they were not going to die! Last time they had died at the hands of Death Eaters but not today! Not while Harry a wand in his hand and a heartbeat!

The tenseness vanished instantly. With a sigh Tonks put her wand away in her robe pocket as Remus knelt down to take the hex off of Snape.

"You alright Snape?" asked Remus wearily as Snape got to his feet, dusting off his robes. Now it was Harry's turn to play act. Though Harry Potter knew Snape was a spy for the Order and Dumbledore's man until the end, the Phoenix did not.

Harry stepped back and raised his wand at Snape,

"He's a Death Eater, he nearly would have tortured you had I not saved you Mr..." Remus gave an easy smile at the boy. Though he claimed to be of age, he still was a boy. A brave one at that, just like...Remus felt his chest sting with pain. Harry...God...Tonks put a hand on his shoulder; she knew he was thinking of Harry.

"Lupin...just call me Lupin, Phoenix. But, Snape over here is a spy for the Order," Remus watched the Phoenix's mouth frown, for that was all he could see. This kid was smart! He was keeping his identity a secret to protect himself and others. He kept his wand trained on Snape.

"I don't believe you, Lupin. I read he was a Death Eater during the First War and then 'changed sides'. Why the hell would a Death Eater change sides and for his enemy unless it was to destroy the light side!" spat the Phoenix. Remus sighed, running his fingers through his hair. Only Dumbledore knew the reasons behind Snape's redemption, yet the Phoenix needed to trust Snape! The boy trusted the Order and its members so, why not Snape?

Harry saw Snape's face change to an ugly look when he mentioned why he would change sides. Harry knew why, his mother. Yet, he had to ask the question.

"Just trust us, Phoenix, please. Snape is a valuable ally, Dumbledore himself trusts Snape!" The Phoenix snorted, what was it going to take?

"Even when the Death Eaters plan to have Malfoy's own son murder Dumbledore and sneak Death Eaters into Hogwarts?" Remus's jaw dropped, as did Snape's. Tonks gasped and turned to look at Snape in horror.

"How...how did you...?" sputtered Snape, his face turning a mixture between a flush and paleness. Remus whirled around to look at Snape.

"Is it true? Has Dumbledore been informed?" Snape quickly regained his composure but kept shooting the Phoenix dark looks. How could he know of that plan? Only the Dark Lord and his most trusted Death Eaters knew of that plan! Who was this boy?

"The Headmaster has been informed since day one and I assure you, Lupin, plans are already in place at Hogwarts to debunk this plan. Besides I am sure I can convince young Malfoy to quit his duty."

"Without revealing yourself?" asked Tonks, her eyebrows raising, Snape shot her a sharp look. Harry felt himself smile, that would be a hard task in itself. Malfoy would tell as soon as he got wind of what Snape was trying to do. Rat. Snape looked back toward the Phoenix,

"How on earth do you know of such a plan?" He watched the boy closely, he couldn't see his face, therefore it was hard to tell if he was Potter or not. His mannerisms were similar to Potter's but the Phoenix was more calm, easy going...mature. The Phoenix smiled, lowering his wand just slightly.

"I have my sources," Snape frowned only he was a spy for the light side, no one else...that he knew of. Or was this boy just clever? He then concentrated hard with Legilimens to enter the boy's mind; he needed to know the truth. If this was Potter, it would be easy to get inside his mind.

Harry then pocketed his wand and crossed his arms. He could feel a slight pressure at the center of his forehead; Snape was using

Legilimens to get inside his mind. Was he going to be shocked! Watched Snape's face slowly turn red with the effort. Remus raised his eyebrows while Tonks stared at him oddly.

"Snape what are you trying to do?" Harry started to laugh as Snape finally gave up. He was breathing hard and looked shocked and angry at the same time.

"You cannot use Legilimens on me, Snape. My mind is shielded tightly, I assure you," Snape saw the dark eyes under the hood gleam as a smile came across the brat's face. No, this could not be Potter, it just could not. He felt his heart tighten with sadness. Albus was right if the Phoenix was not Potter, the truth hurt.

"Legilimens, Snape? On a boy? An ally? Are you mad?" asked Remus who looked shocked, as he looked over at the Phoenix. He hoped it did not offend the Phoenix, though by the smile on his face, he was more amused than offended. "I apologize," said Remus with a slight bow to the Phoenix.

Harry gave a soft smile. Ah, Remus, if only you knew the truth. He wished he could tell but alas, he could not. Though his suspicions were confirmed. Dumbledore knew Harry was alive and told Snape. That would be the only reason he would try and use Legilimens on him, to ascertain the truth.

"I was merely trying to ascertain his identity," spat Snape, now glaring at Harry. Harry's smile widened, Snape was suspicious of him, yet he could not get the truth from his head, it had to be from Harry's own mouth which he was not willing to give in front of Remus and Tonks.

"His identity? Do you have an idea of who he is?" asked Tonks, rolling her eyes at him. No one knew this kid's identity, Snape probably was just guessing. Harry felt his breath freeze in his chest, would Snape reveal Dumbledore's suspicions to them? Would all be lost then?

"A guess merely, but one I think...is wrong..." Harry then could breathe again as a smile appeared on his face again, "But when we last met...you had no idea of who I was yet you..." Snape flushed with the memory, some fool hearty kid telling him 'Sorry!'

"You are a fool, Snape," said Harry coolly, "I have known all along you are a spy for Dumbledore, why else would I be kind to you at our previous encounter? Yet I knew who you were because you did not attack me. You saw me as an ally and...as a child. You have sworn to Dumbledore not to harm any Hogwarts student, when you dared not to raise your wand at me. I knew."

"So you knew...why?" asked Remus. Harry chuckled.

"Merely to see if he had the backing of the Order behind him and as you defended him, Lupin, I trust him as I trust any Order member. For I do not trust spies who do not have the backing and the trust of their allies. I have seen what can happen when a spy turns on his allies," Harry spat. God, he could remember such as short time ago when he hated Snape. For hating him, his parents, lying to him, killing Dumbledore...the list went on and on. Not to mention Wormtail betraying his parent to Voldemort...

A silence then fell between them. Tonks then looped her arm through Remus' as Snape watched Harry very careful. Harry knew he wanted to talk to Harry alone.

"Go Lupin, Tonks, I have a bone to pick with this...Phoenix," snapped Snape, his dark eyes watching Harry's every move.

"But why?" asked Tonks. Snape shot her a look and she knew not argue with him.

"Very well," said Remus with a sigh, maybe this had something to do with the 'Sorry' thing or orders from Dumbledore only for the Phoenix's ears, he had no idea, "Just see the boy is not harmed, he is our ally." He smiled at the Phoenix; he was just a kid after all. An able kid, but a kid.

"I assure you Lupin I will not," sighed Snape, he was growing tired of them being here. He needed the Phoenix—Potter—whoever he was alone. With another thanks from Remus and Tonks, they Apparated with a crack, echoing around the silent graveyard.

"So, Phoenix..." said Snape, "Who are you?" Harry smiled as he turned and walked away from Snape, he was tired and did not want to deal with him tonight.

"I do not wish to tell you, Snape," Snape growled as he followed him up through the graveyard.

"You will answer to me, boy! You are our ally and we need to know if we can fully trust you despite what Dumbledore says. That means a name!" Yet the boy kept on walking, if he was Potter, he'd take a hundred points from Gryffindor...if not...he'd do something...

"Maybe you should listen to Dumbledore he trusts me well enough—" Harry then was seized by pain. Agonizing pain that felt as if his head was put into a vice grip. The pain radiated from his scar. He instantly put up his shields but he could still see and hear everything. Voldemort was raging at Malfoy and Bellatrix for not capturing or killing Remus and Tonks. Harry dropped to his knees clutching his forehead, Snape was a far off thought from his head.

Snape watched as the Phoenix stopped and gripped his head. He watched as he dropped to his knees and curled up, moaning in pain. Unsure of what to do Snape stood there, yet...yet....Potter had visions—nightmares—about the Dark Lord and his doings. That is why Snape had been ordered to teach Potter Occlumency in the first place! Yet the shields around his mind were still strong that even now Snape could not get into his head. But...this could be...

The pain wracked Harry's frame from the head down, like white-hot flame and acid. He bit his lip to keep himself from screaming until it bled. The pain was starting to form in his chest as well, as if a knife was lodged in his beating heart. Voldemort's soul...it was like poison. Finally he let the vision and pain take over...

After several seconds Harry came round again. The pain was fading fast but he felt a sticky liquid on his face and hands. As Harry slowly got upon his knees again, his hood fell off. When he looked down, his hands were covered in blood, as was his face. He was so shocked at the amount of blood that bled from his scar that he sat there shocked, unaware that Snape was now walking around him, to see his face.

Though the boy's face was covered in blood, it was unmistakable who he was. Black hair that stuck up at every angle like, a long pale face like his father's. The eye color had changed, probably his own doing to hide his identity. The glamour was gone and through the heavy make-up, clear as day was the scar. The lightning bolt shaped

scar now inflamed in a deep crimson as blood slowly leaked out of the old wound and down the boy's face.

The Phoenix was Harry Potter...

Snape felt a great weight had been lifted from his chest; he could still keep his promise to Lily. For her son was indeed alive.

"Potter..." breathed Snape as he stared down at him. It was his name that brought Harry back. He stared up into Snape's shocked face. Damn...he knew...he knew...Harry staggered to his feet, not even trying to wipe the blood of his face, or to hide himself.

Harry watched as Snape's shocked and blanched face twist into a look of rage and was that hope he saw? He reached out and grabbed Harry's wrist, twisting it hard as he dragged Harry along with him.

"Do you realize the pain, the suffering...the damage you are causing?" he yelled at Harry. Harry painfully twisted his wrist away from Snape and with a crack of magic, was free. The potions master stopped to look back at Harry in amazement. In a short span of a month since he has last seen the boy, he had learned Occlumency that rivaled his own skill and magic that was far beyond his age. Was it the power that saved him from the Veil?

Harry glared at Snape, he was too tired to explain to him his logic and reasoning for this. He was in no mood for that.

"You don't think I know that?" he yelled back at Snape, trying to keep himself calm, "From the moment I came out of the Veil, I made a choice! A choice to stay dead to the world in order to hunt down the Horcruxes! It's my destiny, my duty!" Snape paled, so the boy did find out what the Prophecy had to say about himself and the Dark Lord.

"How did you escape the Veil, Potter?" spat Snape, he was angry at the boy but he was curious too... "Where did you learn Occlumency so quickly when the last time you could barely manage it!" He watched the boy flush then look away. He brought his fingers up to that famous scar to check to see if it was still bleeding, avoiding his questions, "Well?"

"I will answer your first question, sir. My parents saved me, the blood connection with my mother that protects me from Voldemort, was able to save me from dying in the Veil as long as I held her hand. Together, my parents helped me escape,"

Harry watched Snape pale when he mentioned his mother. He could swear he had whispered his mother's name. But he did not care.

"As to your second...you would not believe me," Snape would say Harry was lying or mad if he told him the truth, that he was from two years in the future where he saw death and destruction...

Snape crossed his arms over his chest as he scowled at Harry.

"I am not going to sit through this school year seeing your...friends mourning you. Hell, the entire school," Harry rolled his eyes not the entire school would mourn him, "I need to you to tell me the truth so I can relay it to Dumbledore. Unless you do not, I am going to take you back to headquarters and everyone will know the truth..."

Harry froze, he did not want to go with Snape, he had to tell the truth, he had to see the truth he would not believe by word of mouth.

"Okay...I am from two years into the future...mentally...spiritually...I saw terrible things, death...so much death that I can't tell you...I will show you..." Harry then gestured to his head and lowered his shields around his mind. He then felt his fingers grip his wand in his pocket, just in case Snape went too far. Then he felt the pressure against his forehead, Harry closed eyes and pushed forward the memories he wanted Snape to see...

The death of Black...Potter screaming as Lupin held him back...

The Horcruxes...the only way to destroy the Dark Lord...

Dumbledore's death by his own hand at Dumbledore's request because he was dying...the deaths of others, Potter's friends and allies...dead

Tonks and Lupin dead...one of the Weasley twins dead...

The Battle at Hogwarts...His own death...he could see blood...so much blood...The flickering of a memory that was not Potter's own...

"The boy...must die..." he heard the memory-self say to Dumbledore. He saw Potter, battered, bloodied standing in the memory, in Dumbledore's office was where the memory took place. He watched as Dumbledore turned to face his memory-self with a grave face,

"And Voldemort himself must do it Severus. That is essential..."

Potter was the final...seventh Horcrux...accidentally made...

Potter with a stone in his hands...The ghostly forms of Lily...Potter...Lupin...Black...A walk through the Forbidden Forest...The Dark Lord...A flash of green light...then waking up in the Department of Mysteries...

Harry felt the pressure on his forehead fade and the memories from his mind. Tears dripped down Harry's face as he opened his eyes. Snape was pale and looked shocked as he stared at Harry.

"My God...Potter," breathed Snape, this was Potter, but not the Potter he had last seen. He had lived this before but under terrible situations. No wonder he faked his death. Lives were on the line and Potter's life...Potter's life was forfeit...He had only months to live...

In order to destroy the Dark Lord once and for all...Potter had to destroy himself.

"Happy?" asked Potter, he looked tired and weary, he then turned around and started to walk away.

"Potter!" shouted Snape, Potter stopped and turned to look at him, "Where are you going?"

"Home..." he said coolly, pulling up his hood again. He then pointed his wand at Snape, "Don't you dare follow me," He then dug into his pocket and pulled out something that winked in the moonlight, a ring. He threw it to Snape who caught it.

It was a simple ring of a gold band and a black stone with cracks in it. A Horcrux. He looked up at Potter he was smiling at him, not an ugly smile like his father used to give him, just a smile.

"I know why you changed sides...My mother...you were her friend, you loved her..." Snape paled, how on earth did he know that? Did the dying old man tell him the truth before he died? "Take that to Dumbledore and...watch out for snakes,"

Potter then turned and with a crack Apparated away leaving Snape alone in the graveyard, holding the ring. The sky was starting to lighten, dawn was approaching.

Who taught Potter how to Apparate and what in the hell did he mean watch out for snakes? He was the Slytherin Head of House for God's sake! But one thing was for sure, Dumbledore's suspicions and the clues were right.

Potter was alive....

Chapter 19: Gringotts, the Order, Friends and Fights, oh my!

Note: Without help from Ron or Hermione this time getting the cup is going to be harder? Who will help our hero this time? Hee...in the mean time I know I have been leaving Ron and Hermione and everyone else out for awhile so, here's some page time with our other friends. Will hell break loose with Harry gone or will they find the strength to move forward and 'avenge' their friend? I sound like that announcer guy at the beginning of superhero movies! LOL! Enjoy! Ubberr long!

The Alley had not been as busy as it had been during the past two weeks. It was September 1st now, and everyone was back at Hogwarts for another term. Harry sighed as he played with his bottle of Butterbeer, how he wished he was there instead of here. Yet, he had already lived 6th year, he could probably pass everything with flying colors! Just a week ago he had seen his friends...Ron, Hermione, the twins, Ginny, Neville, Luna. They were sticking together since Harry's 'death'. That was good; they needed each other in the days ahead...

With a sigh Harry leaned back in his chair staring up at the blue afternoon sky, he was so far behind! He had somewhat been expecting to be preparing to kill Nagini and his death by now...But fate had other plans...for the Phoenix...It all started in July soon after the ring Horcrux had been destroyed and his encounter with Snape...

Harry kept staring at Gringotts; it had been three days he had been here. Three days of nothing. And it was getting on his nerves....Last time he had help to get into the vault now, he could not even think of a way to get in there, without getting caught. Harry slipped on the Butterbeer; three days of staring at the building did nothing. He had spent days at the library at Diagon Alley studying maps and diagrams of Gringotts right down to the foundations. Yet, there was nothing there that could help him. Everything told him not to steal anything from that bank.

He had been behind by nearly two months. He had killed the ring Horcrux on June 27th and was preparing to take the cup Horcrux from Gringotts. The one time he looked into Voldemort's mind was to make sure the cup was there and it was. After Harry's 'death' he had entrusted the cup to be put into Bellatrix's vault. Seeing as how

she was one of his most loyal Death Eaters and had killed Harry Potter. Harry was preparing to take the cup when the Order came a calling.

And this time it was not his fault!

The Order had called his bluff, asking for his assistance. In a letter he sent to Dumbledore he told the Order if they needed his help to owl him for it would find him. And on the 5th of July as Harry was in the library at the Alley did the owl find him, but it was not an owl but a Phoenix, Fawkes. The librarian was quite upset about an Phoenix about her books but allowed him to take the letter.

The letter stated:

Dear Mr. Phoenix,

I am Albus Dumbledore, the head of the Order of the Phoenix; quite sometime ago you sent us a letter with condolences to Harry Potter's death. You mentioned in the letter your desire to assist us in anytime of need. I hope this letter finds you because we are in need of your assistance. As of recently we, the Order, have been having trouble with Voldemort and his Death Eaters.

Muggle and Wizard towns alike have been attacked and our numbers are spread thin. We know that the Death Eaters fear you, even though you do not kill them, they fear you and your tactics. I will send you this letter with my phoenix, Fawkes, when we need you I will send you Fawkes to take you to the problem. I assure you that we will not get in your way, we only need your assistance for the time being, seeing as how the Ministry and Aurors are arresting Death Eaters and with the new school term starting, many parents wish for more Death Eaters to be in Azkaban.

Sincerely,

Albus Dumbledore

P.S. I know the truth, dear boy. Guard yourself well. I will wish to speak to you later. I promise you this, I will not send you on missions with those who know you well...in order to keep yourself hidden until you see fit.

Harry had wondered if this was a bluff or not. Yet this clearly was Dumbledore's handwriting he'd recognize it anywhere. This was a real letter from his mentor. So, Snape had probably told Dumbledore that day he met Snape that Harry was the Phoenix. He wondered how much Snape had told him about Harry's previous...experiences? Was it a past life he had lived before this one? He did not know. All he did know was that Dumbledore knew the full truth and would defer to Harry when he should tell the others. For that he was grateful.

Yet...He had to finish the Horcrux hunt he was so close! Just three more, why draw out his life when it was so close to the end? Yet he had offered them help and they needed him now. He offered his help in order to help his friends and to keep them from dying...He had no choice, he had to help them

Within days he had sent his reply to Dumbledore pledging his support and help. For over two and a half months they hunted down Death Eaters and tracked traitors down. Dumbledore kept his word; he placed Harry on missions with Order members that knew very little about him. Yet one time Sirius came upon the battle, his wand flying with spells into the battle. It made Harry stop dead, watching his godfather in horror.

"Black! GO BACK!" shouted Kingsley as he and two other Order members fought off the Death Eaters. Their numbers have been rising as fast as the Order members' numbers rose. Harry felt himself panic as he watched Sirius weave in and out of the Death Eaters, killing them at will. Someone then bumped into Harry, a man named, Cecil snapped at Harry,

"Phoenix, why the hell are you stopping? Have you not seen an idiot before?" His anger at Cecil calling his godfather an idiot brought him around. He fought on, thrashing and spinning as he brought the Death Eaters to their knees.

At the end of the battle, those Death Eaters who surrendered were turned over to the Aurors for jailing and questioning. With a sigh, Harry sunk to his knees, it was August 18th, it was a hot, sticky summer and fighting in a black cloak was not helping against the heat. He did not know how much more of this he could take! Nearly two months of this, he could take no more. He was so far off track!

"Alright, there, Phoenix? Are you hurt?" asked a witch named Morgan who kindly put a hand on his shoulder. Harry shook his head as he rose to his feet again.

"Just tired..." he murmured, swaying slightly like a drunk. Morgan reached out and held him steady.

"You should rest, but first there is someone who wants to meet you," Harry groaned for the past two months Order members, witches and wizards alike wanted to meet the famous Phoenix. Had Harry realized how popular his persona would have become, he would have never invented it! It was as if he was himself again, the famous Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, with people vying to meet him. All well he had gotten used to it during his first year, so he could handle it well enough. With a guiding, steady hand from Morgan she led them towards Kingsley and Sirius who were having a row. At that moment, Harry realized, it was Sirius who wanted to meet him.

Oh...no...

So, carefully, he began to struggle against Morgan's grip to get away. But her grip was tight and he was exhausted from hours upon hours of chasing after Death Eaters and fighting them.

"Morgan, seriously, I am tired. I wish to go home," Morgan gave him a soft smile of understanding. Poor boy, all he was trying to do was help but so many people...

"I understand, but Sirius Black insisted upon meeting you. You've saved his best friend and cousin from Death Eaters back in June. He personally wishes to thank you," Harry felt the bottom of his stomach drop out. If he thought Remus, Tonks and Snape were a test this was a final...

"You deliberately, disobeyed Dumbledore's orders not to come here!" shouted Kingsley; it was the first time Harry had seen him shout at someone. Sirius' face was red, but calm. Harry could see that the dark circles under his eyes were gone; he had gained weight and seemed to be...somewhat back to his normal self.

"I came here to help you. There was a distress call, Kingsley. You know we're spread out thin! Besides nearly a year I have been

crammed into that infernal house against my will. I want out, I want to fight," Kingsley sighed, his hand smacking against his face.

"But Black," said an Auror slash Order member named Iago, "You have assignments, and quiet a few if I remember. You don't need to come crashing into someone else's party," Sirius took a look at Iago, frowned, then rolled his eyes.

"Besides," said Kingsley, "You locked yourself up in that house for nearly a month and a half after your god—" Sirius shot Kingsley a death glare and he was silenced.

"I know..." said Sirius coolly. He did not need to be reminded that he imprisoned himself there for a near two months after Harry died. He could not bare the pain, the grief after watching his own godson die. It ripped out his heart and soul to see Harry die...It was like seeing Lily and James' bodies again in the wreckage of their house...He couldn't lift a finger to help any of them and both times was his fault...

Sirius turned away from the others as he felt the tears come on as he battered them away from his face. He felt as if he had betrayed the entire Potter family. For handing Lily and James to the enemy and Harry...Harry...for not protecting him as he should. It should have been him that fell through that Veil, not Harry.

It had taken everyone who knew him to try and dig him out from his depression. From Harry's still grief stricken friends, to Remus and Tonks, even Dumbledore. Slowly he climbed his way out of his self-imposed agony. Remus had been right, he had not mourned Lily and James. Thus, he was doubled over with grief and fresh agony over Harry's death and coming to terms that he was not coming back. While peeling open the old wound of Lily and James' death. Oh how the days had dragged on.

Remus purposely stayed at Number 12 with Sirius in order to keep him from doing something stupid, like harming himself or worse, suicide. He remembered vaguely Remus removing everything from the house that could be used as a weapon, leaving the house quite bare. Sirius remembered both of Harry's funerals through a veil of tears and heart wrenching agony. Then...mind numbing grief as he drank this way through bottle after bottle of Firewhiskey and photo

albums. By the end of the month, Remus had forbidden Sirius alcohol and slowly...slowly, he started to recover.

With visits from friends from his past and his friends from the present he slowly realized...He had to fight, finish what Harry had started. Find Bella and kill her. He'd do it for Harry. Each day he got up with a renewed sense of hope. He was a free man now, but he still felt caged but for the fact that he had a mission. Each morning he said good morning to a picture of Harry on his bedside table. Smiling and laughing, his green eyes flashing with happiness. Besides that single picture was a picture of entire Potter family, Lily and James, happy with a tiny baby Harry in Lily's arms.

It would be for them...James...Lily...Harry that he continued on...

"Sirius," said Morgan gently as he felt her hand on his shoulder, "There is someone we'd like you to meet," Sirius then turned to see a man in a dark cloak lined in silver with a silver phoenix flashing on the right side of his chest. The cloak encased his entire figure, his face covered by a deep hood that one could only see his nose and his lower face. Sirius felt his breath stop.

This was the Phoenix.

The man who had saved both Remus and Tonks from a group of Death Eaters one night in June. On a mission for Dumbledore the two stumbled into a patch of Death Eaters and were nearly killed had it not been for this man. If Remus had been killed, he might have killed himself.

The Phoenix gave Sirius a bow, kind of a stiff one at that. Was he scared? Probably, Remus was right he was just a kid! No one spoke at first. The kid seemed very nervous...

"I uhh...I want to thank you for saving my friend, Remus Lupin, and my cousin, Tonks," Sirius put out his hand. The Phoenix stared at it at first, then reached out with a black-gloved hand to shake Sirius'. Sirius noticed that under the robe was a wand belt and an Auror belt with weapons galore. This kid was armed to the teeth, he should be when fighting Death Eaters.

"You're welcome, Mr. Black," said the Phoenix, his voice low and soft. Sirius wondered if this was his real voice or if he was disguising it. Who knew? Sirius smiled gently at the Phoenix.

"You're quite young to be fighting Death Eaters. Many of my friends have children of age who wish to fight but their parents will not allow them," Harry smiled inwardly, the Weasley twins must want to join the Order but their mother would probably have said 'No.' All his friends probably wanted to fight...since they saw him die...

"I am nineteen," said the Phoenix coolly, crossing his arms over his chest, "I am all by myself, there is no one who tells me what to do. I am a...free spirit, as it were," A small smile lit the Phoenix's face.

"But you still are a child," said Sirius, he was a child still though he was past the legal age. Then again, he had been fighting Death Eaters with the Order at that age anyway. But...if Harry was still alive, he'd make sure the boy did not have to fight any battles while he still was living and had a wand in his hand...Though, the Prophecy said...

The Phoenix, frowned and blushed slightly. He turned his head away to hide the blush, but Sirius and the others could see it.

"I have been told you were fighting Death Eaters at my age, so why can't I? Besides..." The Phoenix looked at him again, "You let your own godson fight Death Eaters before he died...and he was younger than I," When the last word left Harry's mouth he swore mentally, this would not bode well. He watched Sirius' face twist into a look of anger and pain. Kingsley placed a hand on his shoulder and yanked Sirius back from attacking the boy.

"He is right, Sirius. Do not get angry with him," Kingsley then shot the Phoenix a look, "Mind your tongue." The Phoenix then bowed in apology.

"I am sorry, Black for my words. My mouth runs when I am tired, so if you please excuse me," He then turned on his heel and walked away but when he was a short distance away he stopped and turned to look at them again, "Black, I do wish you luck in finding your godson's killer. That Lestrage woman has taken so many good lives." Then with a crack he was gone.

Sirius stood there shaking with rage. How dare that boy speak of Harry like that! Yet, he knew he was right. Instead of forcing Harry and his friends to leave, they had let them stay. He had let Harry fight beside him as James used to do. The Phoenix was right...he could not blame him. Sirius could only blame himself...

The encounter with Sirius had been nerve racking for Harry. He was once again in the presence of someone who could easily recognize him in a blink of an eye. One false move, word or spell could reveal everything. That is why he had been so nervous around his godfather. He had spoke out of term with his own death and he knew he would pay for it later.

Only a few days ago did he see his friends in Diagon Alley. He remembered that day with bitter sweetness and a sting of agony. He brought the bottle to his lips with a smile as he remembered it...

August 28th—Diagon Alley, 1:20 P.M.

So here he was, sitting, staring, and trying to think of something. Sounds of people talking and even laughing echoed around the Alleyway. It was not as dark as it had been after his death, besides the start of a new school terms usually brought excitement and happiness, he should know. Every year he was so happy to leave the Dursleys and be whisked off to Hogwarts to magic and friends. Hogwarts was his real home, his haven with everything he wanted that he had been denied in his childhood.

His ears then pricked up as familiar voices floated into his ears. Even though was Harry in his disguise and he knew he should not, but he turned and looked anyway and saw his friends. Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville, Luna and Mrs. Weasley were walking along carrying their shopping bags. Harry watched them closely, they all seemed happy at which he felt happy. He needed to know that they were okay without him and it seemed that way. Yet, he had an urge to follow them, which he did.

He followed behind them, listening to their conversations, he felt as if he was amongst them, part of them. As if though nothing happened. As if his 'death' had never happened.

"Why are we going back to school?" asked Ron, his voice somewhere between whining and sadness. Harry smiled, Ron would

always whine when it came to school yet he could understand here. He did not want to go back to Hogwarts without him.

"We have to go back to school, besides...this is a good way to..." said Hermione quietly to him. Ron then stopped talking as he put an arm her to calm her.

"Please, Hermione..." said Ginny, she kept looking toward her mother and then shot a look at Ron to shut up. He had seen Ginny's eyes moisten with tears then blinked them away. Neville then began to ramble on about some plant his grandmother gave him as a present for being part of the Department of Mysteries and a new wand to replace his broken one.

"That plant is quite rare," interjecting Luna, her radish earrings swaying side to side. Mrs. Weasley then told them to hurry up or they were going to be late.

"I've been waiting weeks to see Fred and George's shop. They had been earning so much money this past week," said Ron, flushing with pride. Mrs. Weasley rolled her eyes. The group of teenagers then talked endlessly about the new joke shop. As they walked down the street they came along a bright, shining shop. Weasley's Wizard Wheezings. Harry smiled as he remembered coming here before with his friends. Shining in bright purple letters over the shop was 'U No Poo'. Harry snorted. It did not lose its charm.

His friends instantly started to laugh, loud bouts of laughter while Mrs. Weasley was pale as she was the last time, mouthed the words to herself. Then bursting out of the front doors came Fred and George in clashing purple and orange robes.

"Hello, mother!" they both cried bowing to an angry Mrs. Weasley. She then proceeded to grab her sons' by their ears and dragged them into the shop. Followed by a laughing Ron, a scowling Hermione, Ginny rolling her eyes, Neville shrugging and Luna skipping. Harry followed them inside; it was as it was the last time. Color to the maximum with sweets, pranks, toys, Fred and George did not disappoint!

"Do you two know you can get killed with that sign outside?" snapped Mrs. Weasley as she let go of the twin's now red ears. Harry pretended to look at the snack boxes but kept an eye on his

friends. Fred and George were now rubbing their ears with scowls upon their faces. Be careful with that ear George, thought Harry.

"It's just a joke mother, everyone loves it. Besides we have top-notch security. If anyone tries to enter this place, we'll know it," said Fred with a smile. Mrs. Weasley sighed, shaking her head.

"Please, everyone take, a look around," said George, jumping in front of Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville, and Luna, spreading his hands out in greeting, "How are you guys doing?" he asked softly to them. They all softly nodded, Hermione looked like she was going to cry. Ron then grabbed her hand and squeezed it tightly. Harry felt himself smile as he watched them walk off hand in hand.

Harry, along with his friends as they explored the shop. It was all as it had been in the past. Harry found the Darkness Powder, he picked up the bag. He'd buy these; they'd be good weapons to use. He also made a mental note to tell Fred and George to lock up this stuff securely and mind whom they sell it to. As Harry kept on walking through the shop, he could feel his soul fly. A smile was on his face, larger than any smile he had in months...a year. The bright colors, jokes, the atmosphere was light hearted. It made him want to laugh until he cried.

As Harry walked around he came to the front desk near the middle of the store. Something caught his eye from a distance. It was a placard, gold with Harry's picture on it with the words:

Harry Potter: 31st Jult 1980-2nd June 1996. Brother, friend, comrade, patron.

Harry smiled it was a memorial placard to him. He was glad that they did not call him the Boy-Who-Lived. He watched as his friends found the placard. Fred and George gave soft smiles at Harry's friends.

"Fred...George..." murmured Mrs. Weasley, reaching out to touch Ginny's shoulder, her eyes growing soft with tears. Silent tears went down Hermione's face as Ron put an arm around her waist.

"This is..." said Ginny grasping her mother's hand. Fred gave a sad smile at he patted the placard.

"Our tribute to Harry," George then gave a solemn bow to the picture of Harry. Had it not been so serious, it would have been funny.

"He is greatly missed," Harry's friends then all huddled together to console each other. They had been that way since Harry's death. His death had brought them closer together and nothing would tear them apart.

The five of them had come together after Harry's death. Ron and Hermione grew closer each day. Ginny would smile and say that maybe they would start dating this year since they grew so close. Before they did not hold hands nor did they wrap their arms around each other's waists, now they did. Hermione would cry herself to sleep and Ron would comfort her.

Ron tried to keep his emotions to himself but alone, he would cry for his best mate. All the times he was jealous and angry at Harry over petty things like the Tri-Wizard Tournament. Neville swore revenge on Bellatrix for both Harry and his parents. He worked harder over the summer on his spells. Ginny was in a deep depression and with the help of her friends had come out of it. Luna dealt with her emotions in her own weird way.

"We put this up not too long after Harry's funeral," said George softly. Mrs. Weasley put her arms around both of her sons. They had missed Harry deeply. To do this for Harry was...sweet...special.

"Oh, Ron, we have a present for you," Fred and George then leapt behind the desk and ducked behind it. They then popped up seconds later with a box in their hands. Curious, Harry moved closer to watch and listen in. Ron, looked at little weirdly at the box. He then opened it up and pulled out blue dress robes. A beautiful dark blue that made Ron's blue eyes stand out. The dark blue outside was velvet and the inside an ice blue silk. The robes were lined in gold thread and gold buttons. Ron's jaw dropped and Mrs. Weasley gasped as she held up the robes to Ron.

"Fred...George, they are beautiful..." gushed Mrs. Weasley, "How could you..." Fred and George leaned against the desk with smiles on their faces.

"Why?" asked Ron, as Ginny petted the velvet. Harry smiled he knew why...

"Harry," said the twins together. Everyone looked up with shocked expressions on their faces.

"You guys don't know how we got the money for all this," said Fred gesturing around the joke shop with a sweep of his hand.

"Harry," said George simply, gesturing to the placard behind him. Mrs. Weasley stood in shock then an angry look came over her face.

"Did he give you money? You gambled it out of him, didn't you? You two swore not to gamble at the World Cup, but—" Fred and George started to laugh.

"No, Mum, no...we did gamble Harry out of his money nor did he give us any of his personal money. All of this was made with the Tri-Wizard money!"

The group stood stunned, but Hermione and Ron had looks on their faces as if they understood. Harry had offered the money to them even Cedric's parents but no one would take it from him. It was his money by the rules of the tournament.

"When none of you wanted the money when he offered it to you. He gave it us—" said Fred with a shrug.

"More like forced," said George, "Remember he pulled his wand on us. So one of his conditions other than the joke shop was to buy Ron some new dress robes and say they were from us,"

"So..." said Fred, "We used all the money to start up the shop then when we earned enough money we bought Ron the robes. We were going to give them to him at Christmas but..."

"With Harry's death, we'd thought it would be a testament to him to give them to you now..." Mrs. Weasley stood stunned then whispered,

"So that is why you asked me what color other than maroon looked good on Ron..." Ron stared at the dress robes in his hands as if they were the greatest treasure in the world. Tears bottled in Ron's eyes. Harry had done this for him...after everything...

"He did this...for me?" The twins nodded as Ron then burst into tears.

Hermione reached out and wrapped her arms around Ron's now shaking frame. Mrs. Weasley, tenderly almost reverently took the robes from Ron and put them back into the box. Hermione and Ron clung together in tears. After a few moments their tears died down. Harry stood there staring at the ground, how he wished he could comfort them.

They then bought their items sadly then left the shop, bowed out by Fred and George. Harry left there feeling the guilt deep in his chest. Juggling his Darkness Powder in his hand he then walked up to the front desk. He paid Fred for the Darkness Powder then leaned into the desk so Fred could see the Phoenix on his robes.

"You're...you're the Phoenix," whispered Fred, Harry smiled and nodded. "This Darkness Powder will be a good weapon,"

"Exactly," said Harry, "I think you need to lock this stuff and be careful of who you sell this to. For I can use this as a weapon then..." Fred and George, who joined in both paled,

"Death Eaters can use it," whispered the twins. Harry nodded. Fred and George then leapt over the desk to the shelf filled with the Darkness Powder. With complicated wand movements the twins made a liquid like glass over it. They then stuck their hand into the glass as it hardened around their hands.

"It's a spell that allows only us to access it," Harry nodded then left with Fred and George's thanks.

Harry then followed his friends again at a distance. They seemed more solemn than when they first arrived at the joke shop. They were speaking in hush tones now. Mrs. Weasley said something about meeting Mr. Weasley in the bookstore and they should have some fun for now.

"What fun?" spat Ron as she walked away, "Now that..." Hermione put a hand on his shoulder.

"We should at least try and cheer up," said Luna softly, a finger twirling a piece of her blonde hair around and around, "Harry would

wish it of us," Harry nodded from a distance as he leaned against a wall and watched them.

"Yes, please cheer up," he whispered. He willed it to happen.

"Come on, let's look around," said Neville. Eventually they were chattering away as they sat down outside a café and bought a round of Butterbeers. Harry sat a ways away from them and listened. Then the worst happened.

"Alright there Weasel?" shouted a voice. They all looked up to see Draco Malfoy come over from the other side of the street. In the distance Harry could see his mother. Malfoy's father did go to jail as last time but Malfoy did not seem so...depressed as last time. The boy had been tight lipped and quiet. Fearful even, he was a Death Eater charged to carry out the murder of Dumbledore. Had that changed too? As Malfoy passed Harry, he swished his wand and Malfoy's left sleeve went up. Harry could see the Dark Mark tattoo.

Nope, Draco Malfoy was a Death Eater and probably the mission was on...But he smiled and seemed happy. Probably because Harry was 'dead' and seeing his friends so miserable made Malfoy happy. Stupid, git bastard! Harry had saved his neck during the Battle of Hogwarts; maybe he should have just let him die!

"Missing Potter? This school year will be quite enjoyable without him. Don't you all agree?" he sneered with a smile on his face. Harry's friends all leapt to their feet pulling out their wands.

"Shut up Malfoy!"

"You bastard!"

"Don't you dare!"

Malfoy laughed as he took out his wand.

"Defending scar head are we?" Ron was shaking with rage.

"We won't take this crap about Harry this year. Prefect or not, we will hex you!" shouted Ron, Hermione's face was red and tears were coming on. Neville's wand hand was steady and calm, it took Neville a hard seventh year to make him strong, yet Harry's death did that

for him. Neville looked like a warrior ready for battle. Harry felt very proud of him. Harry could swear he saw steam coming out of Ginny's ears her face was so red with rage. Luna...well...it was the first time Harry had seen any emotion on her face, the emotion of anger.

"I agree with Ron, we will hex you!" Harry felt quite surprised! That Hermione agreed with Ron on such a thing.

"One foul word, Malfoy and you are dead," snapped Ginny. Malfoy grinned at her.

"Defending your dead boyfriend eh, Weasley?" Harry then flashed back to second year in Flourish and Blotts when Malfoy had called Ginny his girlfriend. Well...she was his girlfriend...in the past. Ginny growled. Neville raised his wand and opened his mouth to cast a hex at Malfoy. A fight was going to break out and he did not want his friends to get hurt. So Harry then stood up and pointed his wand at Draco.

"Levicorpus!" he shouted. With that Draco started to rise into the air. Harry's friends whirled to look at him in shock. Harry was glad his hood was up and he was in full disguise. He once again dropped his voice to a lower octave.

"Draco Malfoy. Son of a Death Eater and a Death Eater himself no less," Draco was now hanging upside down his face flushed red with the blood rushing to his head. Harry had a brief flashback of Snape's memory in the Pensieve but this was different.

"He's not a Death Eater! Is he?" asked Neville, lowering his wand.

"He's too young," said Ginny coolly, "And a great pansy too!" Harry could see the rage in her eyes, the pain. Ahh...Ginny. Harry moved closer to Malfoy who had dropped his wand and looked terrified. He would be terrified now because of the Phoenix's reputation, but he knew that at Hogwarts he'd torment his friends and mock him at any time.

Harry snorted at the memory...Malfoy...Malfoy was going to have a riot of jokes and taunts against Harry, he just hoped the taunts wouldn't get his friends in trouble. Hermione would burst into tears while Ron would try to slug Malfoy while everyone else tries to hold

him back. Ginny, might do something. The kid was just lucky the twins would not be around or he'd be target number one!

Harry wondered if Dumbledore knew about the plot to kill him. Harry had destroyed the ring Horcrux easily nearly three months ago. So there would be no Unbreakable Vow for Snape because Dumbledore was not dying. How was that going to play out?

"You...you are the Phoenix," Harry grinned as with a twitch of his wrist he righted Malfoy again, lowered him to the ground and stunned him. As Malfoy fell back Harry grabbed him by the scruff of his robes.

"That I am Malfoy. And he is not too young to be a Death Eater, look," He raised Draco's left sleeve and the five friends gasped in horror.

"Voldemort never considers age," he then dropped Malfoy to the ground. He then looked up at his friends who stared at him in awe.

"You are the Phoenix?" asked Ron, his eyebrows raising, "The one who kicks Death Eaters' asses and goes into battles wand blazing?" Harry smiled then bowed to them in greeting. It was odd, greeting your old friends who you have known for years as if you just met.

"Greetings," he said coolly. Hermione frowned as she lowered her wand.

"You're so young..."

"I am nineteen and old enough to make my own decisions. Now if you excuse me," Harry turned and left with a swish of his cloak. Ginny saw something that the others did not see as the Phoenix walked away. They were all too busy picking up their Butterbeers and left Malfoy on the ground. She saw something...something...

Ginny then chased after him. She watched him disappear down an alley. She had to catch him...Something was familiar about him but she could not put her finger on it.

"Phoenix!" she cried. He stopped. He could hear Ginny behind him, her footsteps echoing in alleyway and her heavy breath. Did she recognize him? Dared he hope a little? He turned to face her; her

face was flushed, breathing hard. A bit of her hair fell in front of her face.

"You...you...are familiar to me somehow..." Harry smiled as he walked forward. He leaned forward so that he could see her eyes.

"How?"

"I-I don't know," she sputtered Ginny. Her face was flushed a deep red. Harry felt himself smile, she did not see Harry Potter, but had seen something of him. An overwhelming desire to kiss her lips overcame him. In this time he would never kiss her after a Quidditch match...a week of sunny, warm days. A birthday, remember me kiss...No...but she'd have this...

Harry leaned forward and kissed her lightly on the lips. It was not the passionate kiss in the Common Room or the kisses by the lake. It was soft, gentle; he did not wish to startle her. Ginny froze in horror and shock. Who was this man? Why was he kissing her? Ever since she was eleven she thought her first kiss would be by Harry Potter, not this...guy...Yet to her it felt so right. She leaned into the kiss more and more soon, moving her lips hesitantly up and down to find that he responded. She leaned against him, resting her hands on his shoulders. Ginny leaned in more to find his lips no longer touched hers.

"Good-bye Ginny," he whispered, his breath on her lips and with a crack, he was gone. Ginny slapped a hand over her mouth, who was the Phoenix? She did not even hear her brother calling out her name...

Harry smiled; it was their first kiss all over again. But Ginny would never know who gave her first kiss...no, not until the end. It was bittersweet to see them all again. They now knew him as the Phoenix. He barely spoke to them; he wished they had talked more. It would have been like the old days, yet...they had not idea that good old Harry was under that cloak. No...that had passed faster than Harry could bat an eye at. It was a fleeting dream that's all.

With a sigh, Harry put aside his Butterbeer; the task at hand was to get to the cup Horcrux now. The missions with the Order were past! Yet, Harry could not help but turn his thoughts back to his friends again. It was nearly 1:30, how had things gone at Platform 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$?

Was anyone bugging them about his death? Were they happy, sad, angry? Harry could not see what they were doing but he wished he could. What he'd give to be with them right now.

So as he sat there trying to imagine what his friends were doing right now...

September 1st—Hogwarts Express, 11:30 A.M.

The red steam engine of the Hogwarts Express zoomed down the track towards Hogwarts, towards another year. Most the train held happy, excited students, refreshed after a long summer break, ready to learn. Of course with the news of Voldemort's return, many parents considered not sending their children at all. But everyone knew as long as Albus Dumbledore was Headmaster of Hogwarts, the children would be safe. Thus the tension and fear of the summer had passed away. Students talked about classes, teachers, said hello to new and old friends. It seemed joyful.

But in compartment 2-AC, all was not joyful at all. Five students sat quietly, the only noise was made by a ginger haired cat squashed into a cage, Hedwig and a small owl. The usually talkative and noisy, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville and Luna sat in silence. They had been like that since they left the station.

After staying good-bye to family and hello to each other, they were silent. It was because an empty seat next to Ron was reason for their silence. Harry. Harry was dead, for nearly four months now...He was never going to sit next to them on the train and talk. Never to study, play, watch Quidditch with...Never again.

The current team members of the Gryffindor Quidditch team all refused the captain's badge that was rightfully Harry's. All had received the letter, starting with Ron. All refused. McGonagall understood when they all did. If Harry was still alive, he would have been made captain, therefore, she did not force it on anyone. But as the team made their way to the cabin one by one to say hello, they all knew the deferred captain would be Ron. Harry would have wanted that.

"Why do you have Hedwig, Ginny?" asked Luna softly, breaking the silence. Gone were her weird glasses and upside down Quibbler. Ginny softly smiled as she stared up the sleeping snowy white owl.

"After Harry...she came to stay with us," She remembered that day well. It had been a week and some days after Harry's death when the tired owl landed at the kitchen window. The poor bird was tired and nearly gave Mrs. Weasley a heart attack when she tapped the window.

"Hedwig!" cried Mrs. Weasley as she ran to the window and gathered up the bird. She put out water and owl food for the poor bird. She began to pet the bird; the poor thing probably wondered why Harry not picked her up. She probably flew everywhere looking for her young master.

"Mom, what is Hedwig doing here?" asked Ginny came down for breakfast.

"She's going to stay with us now, Ginny dear," Ginny's eyes softened as she watched Hedwig fall asleep right in front of her. She was probably searching for Harry. Poor thing...she did not understand that her master was dead. So the Weasleys kept Hedwig.

"Errol was so happy to see Hedwig. He worships her like a goddess. Ever since she arrived he's been a lazy git," grumbled Ron, Ginny shot him a look. Hedwig was coming with Ginny to Hogwarts in place of Harry.

"Things are never going to be the same," said Neville with his toad, Trevor in between his hands. The friends then looked to the floor in sadness. No, nothing was ever going to be the same.

Friends and comrades alike found their way to their compartment. They would ask how they were doing, how was their summers, how they were handling Harry's death. Every time someone asked how was his or her summer was, Ron grew red in the face.

They spent their entire summer mourning a friend, that's what they did! It was not fun and sunshine like the others! Seeing the anger in Ron's face after the twentieth visit, Hermione reached out and put a hand on his shoulder to calm him. Cho Chang came around, much to their anger. Cho had betrayed them to Umbridge and because the D.A. was revealed Dumbledore had to leave the castle and Umbridge took control.

Cho blushed fiercely, she knew she had treated Harry horribly and now he was dead. When Cedric had died she was angry with Harry, she hated him. Why did Cedric have to die and Harry survive? He was older than Harry with more knowledge and skills. She would have traded Harry's life for Cedric's in an instant. Then she was confused with Voldemort's return and Ministry not believing Harry's story. Yet she had seen the guilt and sorrow in his eyes, she believed him.

Thus she joined the D.A. Yet she had betrayed Harry to Umbridge. Harry had not forgiven her for that. Not to mention that she and Harry had briefly dated. Only after she broke up with Harry that she realized that she only did so to get closer in a way to Cedric again. Harry had been the last one to see him alive...so...She never truly loved him for himself only that he was the last person to be near Cedric. She never got to say she was sorry...

"What the hell are you doing here?" snapped Ginny, her cheeks inflamed. Deep down she was jealous of Cho; she had took Harry's first kiss and dated Harry briefly. But she knew all along she was using Harry to get to Cedric in a way. Nonetheless she had betrayed the D.A. to the Bitch!

"I just wanted to say I am sorry for everything. And I was hoping that the D.A. meetings might still continue?" Cho stood there in an awkward silence as they all stared at her. Getting the message to leave Cho closed the door and left.

"That was kinda harsh you guys," said Neville softly, "She did say she was sorry for betraying us and all, besides Umbridge drugged her!" Hermione frowned at Neville.

"We have forgiven her for that!" snapped Ron; "It's just the way she treated Harry...as a bloody excuse for Diggory. Just because Harry saw Diggory die doesn't mean the girl can attach herself to Harry through that connection," Ginny nodded and with that it was dropped.

"Are we continuing with the D.A.?" asked Luna, she looked disappointed, "I liked those meetings. I looked forward to it every week!" Hermione smiled at Luna. She pulled out a letter and a certificate from Dumbledore.

"Of course they will continue, Luna. We've made it into a club," said Hermione. Ron and Hermione over the summer made a deal. That together they would write a letter to Dumbledore to continue the D.A. That it was Harry's legacy to teach others to defend themselves, that if he was still alive he would continue the D.A. Dumbledore agreed and gave them the permission to make it an official club. With Ron and Hermione as the heads of the club.

"Great!" said Neville with a smile as he read the letter. They would continue where Harry left off, "It's now an official club, where are the meetings going to take place?"

"Ron and I have been thinking about that. Originally there about thirty of us. Depending on how many people will sign up. We have permission to use the Great Hall at 7 o'clock in the evening on Saturdays,"

Hermione expected that a lot of people would join now that the truth was out about Voldemort. Most would want to learn how to defend themselves against attack seeing how in previous years most professors did not teach them that. Hermione expected the numbers to be in the hundreds.

"Will there be sign up sheets again?" asked Luna, who now sounded more cheerful.

"Only for new comers," said Ron, "Old members just show up and..." He stood up and reached into the rack and pulled out a box. Inside were shiny silver colored badges. They looked similar to Hermione's S.P.E.W. badges but they were different.

The badges read: Dumbledore's Army Instructor. Engraved on the badges was a gleaming silver Phoenix carrying the Hogwarts coat of arms.

"Cool!" said Ginny. Ron smiled at his sister, he and Hermione had been working on these all summer.

"We figured if all returning members came back, they could be instructors as well as students seeing as they learned most the stuff we are going to be teaching in the first two months. Here!" Ron passed out the badges to everyone including himself. They then pinned them on their robes.

"We might as well get the word out," said Neville with a shrug, looking at his badge proudly.

"I gave sign up sheets to the Head Boy, Head Girl and the other prefects to put in their dormitories—" said Hermione proudly,

"Expect the Slytherins," cut in Ron with a growl, he had made sure of that. No Slytherin was going to join Dumbledore's Army, most sided with Voldemort. Everyone knew that. Hermione shot him a look.

"Not all Slytherins are evil and side with You-Know-Who. If there are some who are willing to learn and practice, they may come."

"As long," said Ron, "As long if they do not use it on us,"

"That is why I am creating the Code," snapped Hermione.

"The Code?" said Luna oddly, "We had no Code!"

"No, but if we are going to teach hundreds of people. There are going to be basic rules for in club use and a Code, which ensures they only use the spells, they learn in self-defense. I am going to have Professor McGonagall help me right them up when we get to school," said Hermione, matter-of-factly. Ron rolled his eyes.

"I hope the original members get to ratify these rules and Code," said Ginny under her breath, but she knew that was a possibility. There was then a ding of a bell from overhead that told them the train was pulling into the station. The usual reminder told the students to leave their things on the train and would be delivered to their Houses.

The five friends left their cabin and proceeded to the platform. It was already dark, only the lightest colors remained in the west as the rest of the sun set behind the forest and the castle.

"First years! First years this way!" they heard Hagrid calling, traditionally all first year students were taken across the lake by boat before entering the castle and being Sorted. Hagrid spotted them heading towards the carriages where the remainder of the students were taken up to the school. They all gave him a small wave as they

walked up the uphill path. As they walked towards the carriages, Ron, Hermione, Neville and Ginny froze as Luna just kept on walking. She patted the Thestral at the front of their carriage. She then turned to see her friends frozen in horror, staring at the creature.

"Oh, I forgot, you could not see them before..." Thestrals could only been seen by those who has seen Death. Luna and Harry the previous year could see them. Harry, because of Cedric's death and Luna saw her mother die when she was nine. With all of them witnessing Harry's death, they now could all seem them.

"Bloody hell," Ron swore, "They're demon horses," Luna laughed as she jumped up into the carriage, quickly followed by her skittish friends.

"They are perfectly harmless..." Yet that did not comfort them as they stared at them the entire journey up to the castle.

Hogwarts Castle gleamed before them as they entered the Great Hall. It seemed as if they had never had left. But the ever-present factor that Harry was not with them was a fatal reminder of the events four months before. It was painful to remember those final days. The Great Hall draped in black as it had the previous year when Cedric Diggory died. But this time it was for Harry. Everyone but the Slytherins mourned Harry; Ron swore that in that last week if Malfoy made any foul comment, he'd kill him. Yet, thankful Malfoy did not. He only smiled and went on his way.

The funerals, the speeches, people telling them how sorry they were it was all maddening and mind numbing. Yet, here they were, as they walked into the Great Hall, another year. The first year without Harry. People waved and said hello to the friends as they entered. Luna sauntered off to the Ravenclaw table as the other four went to the Gryffindor one.

"Hullo," said Seamus quietly to Ron, "How are you?" Ron gave him a look that silenced Seamus. But he put out a hand and patted Ron's shoulder. The year six Gryffindor boys had insisted the year before to have the extra bed that was Harry's left in their dorm. A constant reminder and they did not wish to shut Harry's death away. Dean nodded to Ron and sat beside Ginny. He tried to engage her in a conversation but she said very little.

So the Great Hall was filled with teachers and students. With a creak, the door opened and Professor McGonagall came in with small, nervous first years behind her. Just in front of the teachers' table was a wooden stool with the Sorting Hat. The wide rip formed a mouth and began to sing its usual beginning song. Hermione smiled at the bug eyed first years as they watched the hat. God...had it been six years to the day when they were all Sorted? Hermione clenched her fist as she remembered sitting on that stool as the Sorting Hat debated to send her to either Ravenclaw or Gryffindor.

"GRYFFINDOR!" roared the Hat, Hermione's eyes snapped open. She noticed that Ron's eyes had done the same. Had he been thinking about it too? They watched as a timid little girl first in line came over to the table. Hermione gave her a warm smile. One by one the students were sorted. A boy stepped forward next that made Hermione's heart stop for a millisecond. Dark black hair, glasses, a nervous face...yet his eyes were bright blue, not green. Yet from the back...it was as if Harry had come back as a tiny eleven year old again.

"Robert, Micheal!" called McGonagall and the boy stepped forward. Hermione squeezed her eyes shut as she remembered Harry's Sorting. It took three minutes for the Hat to decide but it decided on...

"HUFFLEPUFF!" No...Harry was a Gryffindor, a Gryffindor. Ron reached out and grabbed her hand and laced his fingers through hers. That boy looked like Harry...God what a year this would be...Hermione leaned her head against Ron's shoulder in thanks. They had each other and their friends...

When the last of the students were Sorted, Dumbledore stood up for his usual start of term announcements. Hermione could see he still looked sad; Dumbledore took Harry's death hard. Not to mention the fact that the Ministry, Hogwarts and the Order were all dividing his time for his attention.

"Another year beginnings," he said with a sweep of his arms, his bright blue robes glistening in the candlelight, "In the past year we have experienced new fears and new tragedies," Ron could swear his eyes landed on their small group, "Yet we must not let these fears bring us down. For our greatest fear is fear itself. Long ago, a

boy named Tom Riddle sat in this Great Hall, was a student like you...but as we all know he became the terror we know as, Voldemort,"

Hisses and shivers went up and down the students and teachers alike around the Hall.

"Though he may cause us fear, do remember this. He is just a man. That together, if we put our heads together, we stand united. For if we do not together we fall," A heavy silence fell over the room, no one said a word as Dumbledore's speech soaked in.

"But on a lighter, happier note! As you all well know our Defense Against the Dark Arts position for the past six years has not been held for a single year by the same person. Thus the new teacher for this job is none other than our own, Professor Snape,"

As Snape stood up to be recognized with a glint in his eyes. All Slytherins jumped to their feet screaming and clapping loudly. So loud it drowned out Ron's yell of,

"NO!" There was some spatter of applause from the other tables, but Ron, Hermione, Neville and Ginny sat in horror. Neville was starting to turn pale and shake. He'd have to put with Snape as the DADA teacher! Ginny reached out and put a hand on his shoulder to stop his shaking with a yell of,

"It's alright, Neville," over the din of the Slytherins. Once everything was calmed down Dumbledore introduced Professor Slughorn as the new Potions Master.

"Let's just hope Potions is better now," said Dean under his breath as food appeared on that table. Ron's head fell into his arms, not even looking at the food. He looked...green.

"For once I am glad Harry is dead..." he mumbled so that only his friends could hear him, "Harry would go mad with Snape as the DADA professor," There was a solemn nod from all of Harry's friends in return. Thank God Harry did not live to see this!

After the feast students trotted to their Houses for bed, they started school in the morning. As the Gryffindors started to walk up the marble staircase toward their common room a voice yelled,

"Oy! Weasley!" Ron groaned, it was Malfoy again. The boy stood there smug, it made Ron want to rip his face apart, but Hermione's grip on his arm was strong. "Won't this be fun, with Professor Snape teaching DADA? Too bad Potter's dead! This would have killed him for sure!" cried Malfoy, laughing hard along with his goons, Crabbe, Goyle and his girlfriend, Pansy. At first no one moved, but Ginny finally did. She moved fast, reached Malfoy, pulled back her arm and POW!

Malfoy stumbled back, clutching his nose. Ginny had punched him right in the nose with all the strength she had! Her brother and friends stood in shock, other than Quidditch Ginny seemed like a quiet girl. But Ron slowly started to smile; he knew all too well Ginny was a tomboy. With six older brothers growing up she had learn how to wrestle, fly and hit well to survive in the Weasley household.

Ginny then grabbed Malfoy by the front of his robes and stared at him straight in the eye.

"If you say...one more thing about Harry. Ever so small...I will hesitate to break your nose and your balls next time!" Malfoy looked terrified as his friends stood by in horror. Ginny then dropped him to the floor. Instantly Pansy was by his side, cooing softly to him. Ginny stalked up the stairs right past her friends, towards the common room, her face red with rage.

"Are you ah...going to punish her, take points from her?" asked Neville hesitantly to a still stunned Hermione.

"Nope," said Ron with a grin on his face, "We swore that if Malfoy made fun of Harry this year, he was going to get it and he got it!"

Ginny was waiting for them at the portrait of the Fat Lady. In her anger she had forgotten to ask for password, which Head Boy, Head Girl and prefects gave out. Ron grinned ear to ear at his still fuming sister. Neville looked nervous, he always forgot the password. Hermione gave him an easy smile, this password would be easy.

"This is the easiest password ever Neville...Harry!" With that the portrait swung open. Neville frowned, wouldn't that be too easy? Yet, it would be the last password any would expect, the name of a fallen comrade. They climbed through the portrait hole into the warm Gryffindor common room.

"Good night!" called both Ginny and Neville as they took the separate staircase to their dorms. Neville looked tired and Ginny...mad. Ron and Hermione looked at each other, it was the prefects who made up the passwords. They agreed it was a final tribute much like the placard on the wall of the joke shop. Ron then without a word hugged Hermione. At first she stiffened in surprise but then hugged him back with equal force.

"I miss him," whispered Ron, "This is going to be strange...all this without him..."

"I know...it's unfair...I thought we'd finish this together...just like when we went after the Sorcerer's Stone,"

"And the Chamber of Secrets..."

"And to the Shrieking Shack and Sirius...."

They clung to each other like that for quite sometime. Ron was so close to Hermione that she could feel the heat of his blush. They then slowly pulled away. Hermione wiped the tears out of her eyes. Would she ever stop crying? Ron helped by brushing the last tear away with a gentle kiss on her cheek. Heat flooded Hermione's face at the gesture, she gasped and looked up to have her and Ron's noses brush....

They were nose-to-nose, deep crimson in both of their faces. Ron's eyes dropped to her lips, it had not been the first time he thought about kissing her...But she was his friend! He had no idea if she liked him! All the fights and trouble between them...Yet...

He could feel her breath on his lips, they were so close. He steadied himself by putting his hands on her shoulders.

"Hermione....I..." He felt her tense; slowly he leaned in towards her. He could see the shock in her eyes. She had mentioned that Krum kissed her sometime in fourth year...yet Ron had never kissed a girl

before. Hermione gave him a small smile, and then he knew...She liked him back...more than just as a friend. She gripped onto his sweater and stood on her tiptoes to be closer to him. He was about a head taller than she. They leaned in slowly; they were so close they could feel each other's body heat. Two inches away, one inch away...a half an inch...

"Ron! Where are you?" shouted one of the boys from the upstairs, "Two first years are fighting over a bed!" With a gasp Ron pulled away, he cursed silently whoever that was that ruined this. Hermione blushed again then with a nervous laugh told him,

"You'd better get up there," She then pecked him a kiss on the cheek and rushed up the girls staircase. With a sigh Ron rolled up his sleeves and went to see the problem that denied him his first kiss. After the two first years were dealt with Ron went into the sixth year boys' dorm. It was all as it was before; all of his roommates were already asleep. All was the same but for the empty bed next to Ron's...Harry's old bed. Propped on the pillow was a picture of Harry, a reminder. Ron sat down on the bed and picked up the picture.

This year would be different...

"We miss you mate..."

Note: Ta-dah! I had to put in the Ginny x Harry kiss it leads to something in later chapters...Hee-Hee! Please don't kill me! I know some people don't like it! Ron and Hermione's relationship has progressed quickly that near kiss is something to eh? Death they say, brings people together. *pushes Ron and Hermione together but denies them a kiss* Devil Horns! I am mean! Don't worry they'll kiss...eventually!

The whole D.A. thing I thought would be good to add on because it is Harry's legacy and besides it just too damn fun to quit on! I hated that in the 6th book, 'Where's the D.A?...Gone...' Pssssh! Next up Harry gets a way into Gringotts and the Horcrux cup. With help from some friends....Remus and Sirius!

Chapter 20: The Deal

Note: Here we go...Sorry been busy with school and fixing mistakes in former chapters...

Questions posted to me: The length...about 32 chapters

For Amelie de Lorraine: No...I don't mean sex I mean something really cheesy later in the story! I'm kind of sad some of you were 'Go back to Harry, too much Ron and Hermione.' They need screen time too! I wanted the kiss between Harry/Ginny because...Harry needs some love.

Two days had passed, it was September 3rd now. Harry was now about ready to rip his hair out. He had no idea on how to proceed with this Horcrux. He was now thinking as a last ditch effort to give the Gringotts goblins the Sword as a bribe to get him into the vault. Even though he still needed to use the Sword to destroy the cup Horcrux and killing Nagaini. Or he could contact Dumbledore...he could pull some strings but then the Ministry would want to know why and who he was...Ahhh!

"That's it...I give up!" sighed Harry as he slumped onto the café table with another Butterbeer in his hand, his second today. Maybe if he got good and drunk he'd think of something! Leaning back in his chair Harry stared up at the gray sky, pleading for an answer. Hoping the answer would just fall from the sky.

Well...it did not fall from the sky, but came on land in the form of...Remus Lupin and Sirius Black. Today was Remus and Sirius's day off from Order duty. Sirius now spent every waking moment outside of the house, one because he was free and two to keep himself from drowning in grief again. The wounds still had not healed over Harry's death and frankly, Sirius thought, they never will. Remus had insisted on joining him today.

Remus looked pale and frail, August 28th was the last full moon and he was still recovering. Sirius had insisted that he not come with him, that he wanted Remus to go on a date with Tonks. Their relationship was progressing quite well, Sirius would tease them mercilessly that if they married Remus and Sirius would be related. Sirius was happy for Remus he deserved some happiness after all these years...

Happiness...would Sirius know happiness again? Of course he knew happiness and he could find happiness but...Harry would never smile at his jokes again. Harry would never know the joys of life after Voldemort was gone...Happiness...His reason for life, his godson, his responsibility...James's son...was dead.

"Sirius?" asked Remus, his face filled with concern, "Are you alright?" Sirius then smiled at Remus and patted him on the back.

"No worries, Moony!" Remus smiled back but he knew what he had been thinking about, Harry...Remus gave him a brief nod. They then continued on down the alley. They were here today to buy supplies for the Order. Though Dumbledore was the one who mainly supplied to the money for the Order Sirius had gained a great deal of money in the past few months. When Sirius was released from the charges against him, the Ministry gave him a great deal of money to re-pay Sirius for twelve years he spent in Azkaban and the three years on the run. Nearly 1,000,000 Galleons was given to Sirius along with access to Bellatrix's vault.

Sirius had inherited the Black inheritance after his mother died as the last male Black, so Sirius had quite a bit of money in his vault already but now if Sirius wanted to with the money he gained he would never have to work again. Yet Sirius only kept a small portion of the money for himself, the rest he spilt between funds for the Order, Remus and the Weasleys. Hermione, Neville and Luna refused to take any money as did Arthur but eventually agreed since Sirius talked him into doing it for Harry's sake. That he owed them for the years his family took care of Harry as if he was one of their own. Remus too refused but Sirius had already set up a vault for Remus as very belated birthday present since Remus's birthday was back in March.

"Sirius, I can't...I..." sputtered Remus when Sirius handed Remus over the key and the papers to the vault. Remus never had much money. His parents had enough money to send Remus to school with his supplies. When they died Remus inherited all they had which was enough to give him a house and a small account, yet Remus put his money in the house because of the prejudice against werewolves. Yet Remus was never able to accumulate enough money to put into a vault and never had requested one. Sirius held up a hand to stop him.

"James and Lily used their wealth to help you and in their memory and generosity, I will follow in their footsteps," he then shoved the key and papers into Remus's hands before walking away. Thus today's duty was to access Sirius's vault and gain new funds.

Harry sighed as he lay down a few coins on the café table after finishing his Butterbeer; he was totally at a loss. So he got up from the table and walked down the alley. Not knowing his answer would run into him, literally. Harry stared down at the floor his mind wandering as he bodily wandered around the alley. How in the world was he going to complete this task? He did not have Hermione or Ron by his side to help him this time. The Horcrux was deep in Gringotts...Harry guessed that he had no choice but to ask for Dumbledore's help—

Harry then slammed bodily into someone; Harry stumbled back and landed hard on his bum. Luckily Harry had placed a sticking charm on his hood to keep it on his head. He had learned his lesson after the encounter with Snape, keep your hood up at all costs. Shaking his head Harry looked up to see whom he ran into. A deep flush filled Harry's face, he had run into Sirius and Remus. Oh no...no, no, no, no! Sirius blinked when he felt someone slam into him. When he looked down and his jaw fell slightly.

It was a young man wearing black robes lined in silver with a silver phoenix glittering on the right side of his chest. The man was staring up at him in shock but he could not see his face very well. He knew this man, it was...

"The Phoenix..." whispered Sirius, the boy looked up at him, from what he could see of his face, he was in shock.

"Well hello, again!" said Remus with a smile on his face as he reached out and grasped the Phoenix's hand pulling him to his feet. Harry could see Sirius was still in shock so he turned to Remus first.

"Hello again, Mr. Lupin," said the Phoenix coolly, dusting himself off. "Long time no see," Remus smiled back at him, it was soft and gentle.

"You remember Sirius Black," he then gestured to Sirius who finally stopped staring at Harry long enough to finally close his mouth. Harry nodded to Sirius, keeping in mind the things he had said to

Sirius as the Phoenix the last time they met. Yet Sirius did not look angry with him, he smiled and held out his hand.

"Black," said Harry curtly to his godfather. He had to remember he did not know them. Though he wished to know the warmth and familiarity they had before this but he could not.

"What are you doing here?" asked Sirius warmly but curiosity and suspicion came across his face. Harry shrugged and leaned against the wall. He did not want to tell them what he was looking for. Remus's eyes flashed.

"Are you looking for a Horcrux?" he asked quietly. Harry's head shot up, his hand diving for his wand. How did they know? Where they Death Eaters in disguise or did Dumbledore tell them the truth?

"Easy," said Sirius, "Dumbledore explained what you were doing to only a few trusted people," Harry's jaw dropped, Dumbledore told them? Was he mad? Sirius smirked at the look on the Phoenix's face; he believed Dumbledore wouldn't tell them what he was doing.

"That was foolish of him. It's endangering me!" Sirius shook his head all those who knew where good at Occlumency and would die before revealing anything, "And all of you, what was he thinking?" Harry began to pace up and down the small bit of street they were standing on. How could Dumbledore give them that piece of information? Was he trying to kill everyone? The last time he only dared breathe that secret to Harry and Snape, no one else. Harry only dared to breathe that information to Ron and Hermione and eventually his closest friends. If Voldemort found out...

"He trusts us, so...are you going to?" asked Sirius with a shrug. Harry had no choice now.

"It seems I have not choice, follow me," He then pointed to an alleyway, dark and quiet behind them. "I do not wish to be spotted by any spies lurking around," They followed him until they were deep in the alleyway. Light shined from overhead but the alley was still dark, yet he could still see their faces. Harry could not be Harry right now; he needed to be the Phoenix. Harry then spun on his heel to face them, keeping a hand over his wand.

"Yes that is what I am doing...Looking for a Horcrux," Sirius whistled quietly as a tight gasp from Remus. Remus shot Sirius a look, was the Horcrux here; in the Alley? Thus Remus asked the question, the Phoenix frowned at him but gave him a brief nod. Sirius felt his breath stop, there was a Horcrux, here in Diagon Alley? Could Voldemort be so stupid as to hide one here?

"Where?" Harry bit his lip did he want to tell them? But then looking at the curious face of his godfather, Harry remembered something. That not long after his death was announced there was a full article about Sirius's release from all the charges set against him. That the Ministry paid him 1,000,000 Galleons and gave him full access to Bellatrix's vault now that she was a criminal on the run. Sirius could get him inside the vault! Sirius was his ticket in! Harry frowned at him to show he did not like to tell him, faced away from him, crossing his arms over his chest.

"My sources tell me that Voldemort entrusted a Horcrux to Bellatrix telling her it was a valuable item to him and that it is to be protected," Sirius paled, a Horcrux was stored right under their noses, his more or less.

"There is a Horcrux in Gringotts...In Bellatrix's vault?" asked Remus slowly, the color draining from his face in horror. The Phoenix turned to face them and nodded in return.

"Yes, that is why I am here, I am going to retrieve the Horcrux from that vault," Sirius stood stunned, this kid had guts! Remus frowned no one could break into Gringotts. It was impossible with all the guards and security.

"That is impossible," said Remus, shaking his head, "No one has stolen any thing from Gringotts, never." The Phoenix smiled at them, Sirius could swear he saw a glint in his eyes, it made him shiver. He was so...confident, cool, calm, collected, it reminded him of James during those days fighting Death Eaters...it reminded of Harry in some way...Sirius grimaced as he saw his godson's horrified face as he fell through the Veil.

No! Sirius thought, I must think about that.

"I like a challenge...but you are right Lupin there is no way to bypass the security and Bellatrix's vault has high security measures," He should know from the last time....

Hermione disguising herself as Bellatrix, Ron as a foreign wizard, Harry under the Cloak. Following Griphook down into the bowels of the bank. The dragon, the goblin activated vault. Treasure that if touched burned and multiplied around you until it buried you alive. The battle...the escape...

"Phoenix?" asked Lupin, Harry's head shot up, Remus was watching him with worried eyes, "Are you alright?" Harry nodded in return; he did not need flashbacks right now!

"It's impossible as you say, if you know so much, Bellatrix's vault has top security," smirked Sirius, Harry frowned at his godfather, "So...how do you plan to get in?" Harry leaned against the wall, facing Sirius, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I was hoping you could help me...I know Black that you have access to Bellatrix's vault, can you take me to the vault?" Sirius blinked, the Phoenix was asking him for help? Sirius did not know, Dumbledore told him to trust the Phoenix but could he trust him well enough to take him into the vault? Could he trust him? Sirius's eyes flickered to Remus who shrugged.

"I'm not sure..." said Sirius, the Phoenix sighed. Harry rubbed his eyes, Sirius didn't trust him? After all he's done?

"I know you don't care for your cousin Black," Sirius growled at Harry calling Bellatrix his cousin, she was no relative of his! She was dead to him; more or less she was going to be dead by his hand! "If I do steal anything from her vault other than the Horcrux, I'm sure you really would not care!" Sirius sighed, running his fingers through his hair, the kid sounded desperate. He guessed the kid really needed their help.

Harry really did need their help. He needed their help to get the Horcrux. What could he do to convince Sirius he needed his help? Maybe he could trade something for the Horcrux. What could Sirius want from him?

"Look, I'll make a deal with you. Is there anything you want? That I can trade for the Horcrux?" Sirius's eyes narrowed.

"Nothing, I don't want money I just want..." Sirius gripped his hand's into fists, the image of Bellatrix's face as she sent Harry through the Veil...that bitch...

Harry then knew what Sirius wanted, revenge. He wanted revenge for him. Harry then knew what he had to do, lie. Though he could find Death Eaters if he really wanted to, he knew he could. But he did not want to lead Sirius to the Death Eaters, they would surely kill him, no, only why to get him to agree was to lie.

"I know where the Death Eaters are, I can take you to them, so you can get revenge for your godson," Sirius's head shot up, his eyes flashing. He opened and closed his mouth several times and finally spoke,

"You can do that?" he asked, Harry could see he was still hesitant, so he nodded. Sirius sighed, running his fingers through his hair again. Was it worth it, a Horcrux for revenge? To Sirius it sounded like a life for a life. A piece of Voldemort's soul, gone forever, one step closer to killing him in return, the death of Bellatrix...

Harry's face flashed before Sirius's eyes. Yes...it could be worth it. He just didn't trust the kid, they barely even knew him! The Phoenix then spun on his heel and started to walk away.

"Hey!" said Remus, that was quite rude of him, what was he doing? The Phoenix was walking slowly, step by step. What was his game?

"When I walked out of this alley, the deal is over," Harry kept walking slowly, but looked over his shoulder. Sirius was still deliberating, Remus looked confused. Sirius plainly did not trust him. He was going have to do something really...stupid to get his godfather's attention.

This was going to hurt!

Harry turned away from them again, "You are so hesitant, Black, I'd thought you'd take my offer in an instant. But I have to wonder, Black, from the way you are hesitating...is a piece of Voldemort's soul worth a shot at revenge?" Sirius's head snapped up to look at the Phoenix, he was walking away! He then stopped and turned to face the two men, a smirk on his face,

"Is that your godson of yours worth revenge?" Harry knew he needed to get Sirius to agree at all costs. He watched as Sirius's face morphed into a look of pure rage and hate, he was going to get it.

Sirius could see Lily, James and Harry's faces flash before his eyes in a matter of seconds. Lily and James...dead in the ruin that was once their happy home...Harry crying in his cradle with his forehead bleeding from the cursed scar...Hagrid taking Harry from him...Peter...Azkaban...Seeing Harry on the side of the road, in shock at seeing him as Padfoot. That day in the Shack...Harry's great big green eyes lighting up when Sirius offered him a home...Harry at the night of the Thrid Task...Harry at Number 12...Christmas...The Veil...oh God...the Veil...No...No, the memories were coming back!

Sirius was fighting Bellatrix, laughing trying to make her mad so that she slipped up, she did that numerous times both in childhood and at school. Suddenly a spell hit her causing her to fall, before Sirius could see what happened, there was Harry. Harry, had a desperate, fearfully, determined look on his face, pushed him out of the way. He thought a spell was coming, before he could react he was flying. The landing was hard, when he turned around his godson had his wand pointed at Bellatrix, triumph written on his face. Then a shadow behind at corner, a Death Eater he was going to kill Harry! NO!

"HARRY!" he remembered screaming, hoping his godson would move. But it was a stunning spell not the Killing Curse! For once he was thankful, but went he saw who casted the spell, it boiled his blood. Wormtail, the traitor! He was going to get Harry killed! He nearly did fifteen years ago. Sirius remembered jumping to his feet his wand at his cousin, he needed to get Bellatrix away from Harry. Behind Harry was the Veil and if he fell through...

"Bellatrix, step away from Harry," Yet she acted, a spell slammed into Harry and pushed him through the Veil. He could see the shock and horror on Harry's face as he ran to try and grab him. But Harry fell...back...back...back...back...until he could no longer be seen. At that moment Sirius felt his world shatter into a million pieces along with heart.

"HAAARRRRRRYYYYY!" Harry was gone...Harry was dead...

No, one insulted Harry while Sirius was around and lived to tell about it! This kid was dead, ally or not! He had not been this angry since he had chased after Peter after Lily and James's deaths!

Before Harry could raise his wand to defend himself, if he wanted to, Sirius hexed him, causing him to fall backward. But Harry's fast reflexes steadied him, Sirius then charged him. He began to swing punches at Harry. Harry ducked and dodged most of them, until one good right hook hit him hard on the left side of his face.

It was a mean right hook, worst than Dudley's and Harry had enough of Dudley's punches since the age of one to tell! Harry could taste blood in his mouth, he bit his lip and cut the inside of his mouth. The blood dripped down his chin, but Harry had not have time to react. Before Harry could recover Sirius had slammed him against the wall, his wand under Harry's chin.

I guess I over did it! Thought Harry, who was starting to choke under his godfather's forearm that held him in place. At least his hood stayed in place, thank goddess for sticking charms! Sirius's wand was at his forehead; his hand was clearly shaking with rage. Harry could see his grey eyes were near black with rage, for once, Harry was scared of his godfather!

"Sirius..." said Remus with a sigh; Harry's eyes flickered to him, Remus looked angry. The amber-brown eyes were filled with anger, yet he was trying to call Sirius off like an angry dog. Yet Remus made no move to help Harry, he just stood there, like a master telling his dog to heel. This dog would not heel!

"Take it back!" spat Sirius; sparks flew from his wand that burned Harry's face as he tried to pull his godfather's arm away from his throat. Sirius was cutting off his air with his forearm, making it very hard to breathe since his arm was about his neck and chest. Not to mention Sirius had lifted Harry several inches off the ground so that the tips of his shoes touched the ground. Black spots danced in front of Harry's eyes, was he trying to kill him? "TAKE—IT—BACK!" shouted Sirius his face flushed in anger.

"I—I'm—" choked Harry, trying to use all his strength to pry Sirius's arm away from his throat, but Sirius was strong.

"My godson was my life and now he is dead, you little—Revenge and fighting for those who are left is my purpose now, without it I would die!" shouted Sirius, the thought Sirius would die because he had nothing to fight for made Harry gasp, but it was a sharp, small intake of air. "I would kill you right now if you were not our ally and popular with the other Order members,"

"Sirius!" snapped Remus starting to walk forward, "He's turning blue, let him go!" Sirius loosened his hold when Remus talked to him so Harry had his chance,

"Alright! I'm sorry!" Sirius then let Harry go, Harry slid down the wall. He gripped his throat, coughing and sucking in new breathes of air.

"Now that I have you're attention," murmured Harry under his breath as he got to his feet. When he looked up he found Sirius still had his wand on him. "I'm sorry but I had to get your attention, Black...so...a life for a life?" Sirius was angry, but Harry held out his hand.

"You better not turn on us!" snapped Sirius, Harry swallowed in fear, he was going to turn on them, yet he needed to destroy this Horcrux, hopefully they could forgive him for this...for all of this. Harry would not give them his word so he only nodded.

"Deal!" said Sirius he grasped Harry's hand and shook it hard.

It was done.

Note: Woah! SO...ummm yeah Harry ticked Sirius off real bad, but you gotta do what you gotta do! I know, I know why does he lie? Well Harry does not want to send them to chase after a Death Eater in a pack of Death Eaters who might kill them! Remember he's trying to keep them all alive, besides it makes great story telling! Next time: We go into Gringotts and get the Horcrux. But beware betrayal is involved tune in next week!

Chapter 21: Betrayal and Flight

Note: Watch out! Fight scene, between...Read on...

Questions posted to me: To clear up some confusion...

Harry did not fight back against Sirius because he did not want to hurt him. Besides he kind of over estimated Sirius's reaction, he was not prepared for it, though he should have been. It's one those stupid teenager moments when you forget something about someone then it comes back to bite you in the ass. Harry at the time did not remember Sirius's reaction to taunts against his parents.

Also Sirius getting mad and being distrustful of Harry as the Phoenix is part of the story so that when Sirius does find out who the Phoenix is, it is a real shock and guilt trip. Yet Sirius knows how valuable the Phoenix is to the Order because Dumbledore told them about the Horcruxes and therefore he would not kill him! You all know how Sirius is when he is mad, he looks like he can kill but he can control himself, especially now, Harry's 'death' matured him in a way for the better, you'll see! Plus Dumbledore did not promise HARRY that he would not tell the others, Harry just assumed that like last time it would be between the two of them. OK?

Harry walked quite stiffly into the main entrance to Gringotts bank. Nearly seven years ago when he was just a small boy of eleven he found this bank...this world to be a dream, a dream that he was rescued by a giant telling him his parents were of magic and that he, Harry, was a wizard. It was all the same, the glittering gold and brass, the wooden floors that shined and the daily activity of witches, wizards and goblins. Yet that was not the reason Harry was walking so stiffly. It was Sirius's wand digging into his lower back.

After Harry's little...confrontation with Sirius in the alleyway and the agreement to take him to Bellatrix's vault, Sirius jabbed his wand into Harry's back, just in case.

"Just in case," he smirked as Remus led the way up toward the bank. It seemed quite normal, three people in a row going up the street because the alley was crowded. No one noticed that Sirius's sleeve hid his wand.

Harry reached up and wiped the blood from his lip and chin. He should have realized and be prepared for Sirius's reaction; he had forgotten that time in the Shrieking Shack when Peter tried to defend his actions against Harry's parents. He should have known better. Yet he did not expect his godfather to nearly choke the life out of him! Luckily Harry was still valuable to the Order and Sirius knew that. Yet Harry bit his lip, making him wince against the cut on his lip. Now he damaged his image as the Phoenix and Sirius was so close...he could revealed everything.

He was a moron!

The pressure against Harry's back faded, Harry turned to see Sirius's calm but still angry face glare at him.

"Don't move," Sirius stepped up to the counter as Remus stood beside him. Harry shot a glance at Remus, Remus didn't even look at him. There was still anger in eyes and Remus stood quite rigid, he was quiet though. That scared Harry the most about his former professor and friend. Harry did not even try to talk to him that might just be suicide! As Sirius talked with the goblin at the counter Harry stared around Gringotts, taking in every exit, guard, using his magic to probe the defenses. Hopefully this time he could get a clean get away...

Sirius then came back with a goblin at his side, a key in his hand. Harry kept his eyes neutral when Sirius looked at him; the anger was still there. What would he think after they found him dead when he faced Voldemort? Discovering that he was the Phoenix after all? Harry prayed he'd never have to see that! He'd be dead and gone by the time that happened!

"This is Griphook, he'll be taking us to the vault," Harry felt himself mentally slap himself, why was fate doing this to him, why? Harry nodded his head and gritted his teeth, all or nothing rode on this. He had to get that Horcrux at all costs...he'd just try not to harm Sirius and Remus in the process. Griphook led them to the caverns where there were a number of carts that led them down to the vaults were waiting. The four of them clambered into the cart.

Harry kept a tight hold on his hood, he make sure before they entered the bank he reapplied the sticking charm to his hood, he did not want them to see his face. The cart then took off down miles of

track that always reminded Harry of a rollercoaster, expect this one was dangerous and kept the same speed. The cart went miles and miles underground, lights and darkness flashed before Harry's eyes. The wind roared in his ears.

His eyes flickered to his godfather and former professor; Remus was the one who had his eye on him now. He did not seem angry anymore, just, curious. What was he thinking? Yet Harry dared not look at him, too much was at stake and he could not blow it. Not today. The cart finally came to a halt. The large vault doors loomed overhead; Harry sat there in the cart staring up at them as memories assaulted his vision. With a harsh shake, Harry rid himself of the memories and jumped from the cart.

"Stand back," said Griphook, he placed his hand on the center of the door and with numerous clicks, the door creaked open. Harry eyed the dragon near the door, if he had to escape...With a hiss the doors fully opened, torches flickered and gold shimmered before them. Remus let out a low whistle as they walked into the vault.

Harry remembered all of this, the gold, the spells, the burns...it made his hands shake. Sirius reached out for a piece of gold, Harry opened his mouth to warn him, but Griphook spoke up first.

"Wait, Mr. Black, all this has Geminio and Flagrante charms, which burn you if you touch the treasure and it will multiply and bury you alive," Sirius's hand stopped inches from the treasure and Remus backed away. "I'll remove the charms in just a moment," Sirius shot Harry a look which meant don't touch anything as Griphook moved around the chamber and removed the charms.

Once it was safe to touch, Remus and Sirius pulled out their wands and allowed Harry to step forward.

"No funny business," said Remus, "Get what you need, that is all." Harry rolled his eyes; this was going to be hard. He fingered his Cloak that he brought with him in his pocket, maybe it just might be the only way...Harry then surveyed the upper part of the chamber, the cup had been put high up. Harry pulled out his wand and finally found it, stashed between two gold vases to disguise the cup. Even at a distance Harry could make out the H on the cup with the badger. That was it!

Helga Hufflepuff's cup—Horcrux number five.

"Accio, Horcrux—Hufflepuff's Cup!" Sirius and Remus turned and looked up as the cup zoomed into Harry's outstretched hand. Like the other Horcruxes when it touched his skin it stung his scar, yet Harry made no expression of pain. Sirius and Remus walked over, eyeing the Horcrux.

"That's it?" asked Sirius, poking it with his wand. Harry nodded.

"Are you going to destroy it?" asked Remus, Harry turned to face him.

"Not here, I have the weapons I need to destroy it somewhere else. I'll send it to the Order afterwards," Harry then stepped back as Sirius and Remus roamed the vault.

"Are you sure?" asked Sirius, his eyes still on the cup in Harry's hand, Harry could see he did not believe him.

"I can perform some spells to check to see if it is a Horcrux," Sirius nodded as Harry raised his wand over the cup. When his godfather looked away Harry pretended to perform the spells to check the cup, yet he knew it was a Horcrux, already. He just wanted to be in their presence for a few moments longer before...

Before he betrayed them, loosing their trust...forever as the Phoenix, maybe...maybe even as Harry too...

"This is quite a bit of wealth here, Sirius," said Remus fiddling with a gold coin. Sirius snorted, Bellatrix's husband Lestranger was wealthy; with both of their fortunes it was a lot of gold. Gold was everywhere.

"Once the war is over, I'm going to give all of this away, to help people, rebuild the Wizarding world." Remus nodded, Sirius was a good man, yes all this gold would be used for good.

"Surely you want to keep some of it?" asked Remus as he surveyed a priceless glass vase, "Some of this stuff is priceless!" Sirius shook his head, Harry knew his godfather would never keep anything that had to do with his family, he hated his family as much as Harry disliked the Dursleys.

"All of it goes! I'm sure some of this jewelry, vases and other antiques will sell at auction after the war. I'm even thinking of selling the house too," Remus sighed, why give up a perfectly good house? All well it was Sirius's decision, not his.

"But your mother's portrait, no one is going to want a house with that woman screaming at everyone and everything," A smile came over Sirius's face, he was close to solving that little problem.

"I've been playing with spells to get that damn portrait off the wall! Just the other day I was able to get the top portion off the wall. Just a little bit more powerful magic and...tah-dah, she's off," Remus ran his hand through his hair shaking his head, ah Sirius...Clever as ever.

As Harry watched them, he slipped his Cloak over his shoulders. Standing there for a moment he bade them a silent good-bye and sorry. With that he turned and leapt into the cart, he then pushed the lever forward as the cart began to move toward the exit.

The cart gave off a pitched squeak that made Harry's heart leap in his chest. He'd hope it'd go quietly, but it was just his luck it would make a noise. Sirius and Remus whirled around as the cart slowly started to take off. Sirius looked around for the Phoenix he was gone, he was leaving...he...the bastard!

"Shit!" swore Sirius as he started to chase after the cart along the pathway, pulling his wand out of his pocket, pointing at the cart. Pulling the Cloak tighter to him, Harry ducked as he heard Sirius scream,

"HEY!" as the cart squeaked away from the platform. Harry then pulled off the Cloak and stood up, gripping the edges of the cart tightly as it began to pick up speed.

"I'm sorry, but I cannot endanger your lives by taking you to the Death Eaters, you are too important to the Order for that. Besides I swore to Dumbledore I would not bring an Order members to harm! Thank you for your corporation gentlemen!" Harry gave a swift bow before ducking back into the cart as a spell missed him by inches.

Now he had done it!

"You bastard! GET BACK HERE!" screamed Sirius as Remus tried a number of spells to stop the cart but it was already gaining speed and momentum.

"Damn it, I cannot stop it!" said Remus as Griphook summoned another cart to follow the Phoenix. They leapt into the cart and took after the boy.

"He double crossed us!" spat Sirius as they traveled back up to the main bank, praying they had a chance to catch him before he was gone forever.

Harry was ahead by maybe three minutes; he needed to get out of here, fast! Bolting out of the cart, he ran into the main bank, pushing people out of his way. He had to get away, now! He could hear Sirius yelling from behind him as he bolted into the alley. Harry prayed he could melt away into the crowds. His eyes stung with unshed tears at Sirius's voice. They would never trust him again after this...never again.

Harry ducked into an alleyway as he saw Remus and Sirius run into...oh dear God...Tonks, Moody and Dumbledore. Great! He could just see them from where he hid in the alleyway, trying to lower his breathing and heart rate so they could not detect them. Sirius was swearing loudly as Dumbledore tried to calm them.

"And he ran off! That bastard double-crossed us Dumbledore! I don't understand why you trust him! First Snape now...this guy!" Sirius's face as red with anger, his eyes dark with anger. Dumbledore raised a hand as Sirius sucked in a few deep breaths.

"I trust the Phoenix because I know him very well Sirius. He's doing for the Order is a great service by destroying these Horcruxes at great personal risk. At anytime he could be caught, tortured and killed," Sirius stamped his foot in anger.

"Then he should be! After what he said...after what he promised..." Dumbledore's eyes flashed,

"What did he promise?" Harry saw his eyes flicker down the alleyway. He knew he was there. Harry started to slowly reach into his pocket for his Cloak...

"He promised," said Remus coolly, but with anger in his voice. Harry could see his face twisting into a face of pure anger, the only time he saw that was when he called him a coward for trying to run away with Ron, Hermione and himself after he married Tonks and after she became pregnant with Teddy. Harry had made him angry enough so that he thought about his actions and eventually went back to Tonks, "He promised that in return for the Horcrux, that'd he'd take us to Bellatrix to revenge Harry. But later he double crossed us saying he promised to you he could not endanger us!"

Tonks paled as she touched Remus's arm, Moody growled under his breath, this kid was more trouble than he was worth it seemed.

"I did have him swear that he would not bring any Order members to danger. I do admit what he promised was false, but you should have just given him the Horcrux. It is a matter of life and death," Sirius snarled at Dumbledore's words.

"I do not give anything to anyone I don't know! Beside he insulted Harry, to my face!" Tonks gasped as she looked to Remus for confirmation. He nodded.

"He seemed like such a nice boy, maybe he did it to get you to agree with him Sirius, this is his job after all...the Horcruxes and all..." Tonks was dead on. Moody grunted.

"It sounds like the kid's over his head and stupid. Using the dead to get what you want..." Harry then saw his magic eye move toward the alleyway. Harry froze. He had been found. "There is he is!" Wasting no time, Harry grabbed onto a ladder and started to climb. He found the latch that kept the ladder to the ground with a swish of his wand, the magic broke it. Up he went as Sirius and Remus jumped into the alleyway shooting spells at him. One nearly hit him, missing by inches. Harry scrambled over the wall unto the roof.

"He's on the roof!" shouted Sirius, "Don't let him escape!" Harry could feel magic swirl around the building. He needed to get off this roof, now, before they caught him. Harry looked all around the building for an escape. The broken ladder was out of the question...maybe if he jumped?

Harry looked over the edge, they would be enclosing on him at any moment, he had to act fast, he could Apparate his way out, but

Dumbledore was with them...maybe...Nevermind, Harry focused on Godric's Hollow and summoned his magic...but nothing happened. He tried again and nothing happened, Harry felt the pit of his stomach drop, he could not Apparate!

"We've set up Anti-Apparation wards around the building," he heard Moody shout, "You're not going anywhere!" Harry growled under his breath, he thought those wards took hours to create and quite a bit of magic to create, he guessed not! Harry could not escape; he was...doomed to say the least! Thinking quickly he knew he needed to escape before they could force his identity out of him! His mind then drifted back to 4th year the Tri-Wizard Tournament...an Accio charm...his Firebolt...That's it!

"Accio Firebolt!" Harry cried, pointing his wand to the sky. He prayed it would get here in time. There was a bang from behind Harry as the trap door leading to the roof opened. Harry pulled out his wand; he had no desire to fight them. But he knew he would have to. Sirius of course was the first to come out, firing spells at him.

With a yelp Harry rolled, ducked and dodged the spells, not firing any back at his godfather. Remus quickly joined in and Harry knew he had to leave before they killed him.

"I'm not going to fight you!" he shouted at them, ducking another spell. Finally Tonks, Moody and Dumbledore were on the roof. Moody had his wand out, Tonks had hers but she looked like as if she did not want to use it and Dumbledore, hopefully he was thinking of a way to get Harry out of here. A spell finally hit Harry causing him to stagger toward the edge, blood dripping down his face and neck.

"Stop," said Dumbledore, at the command Remus and Sirius stopped, but they still looked ready to pounce, "You two have let your anger and embarrassment get the better of you!" Tonks reached out and lowered both Sirius and Remus's wand arms. Yet Harry could still see the betrayal and anger in their eyes, it made his throat tighten. Dumbledore then looked to Harry with a mixed look of bemusement and disappointment on his face.

"Why did you do this Phoenix?" Harry straightened up and turned to look at Dumbledore.

"I did what I had to do, I'm sorry Black, but this is war. The only way to defeat Voldemort is through his Horcruxes, I am sorry if I offended you and your late godson!"

"You have no idea!" screamed Sirius, "I do not forgive you and I don't think I ever will! I don't trust you, you bastard! How can you say it is because of the war! The Horcrux maybe but using my godson's memory against me! Never!" Harry winced when Sirius told him he would never forgive him, the Phoenix, but Harry? Out of the corner of his eye Harry watched his headmaster, he was afraid this might just be the opportune moment for Dumbledore to tell his secret.

He need not worry about Dumbledore blowing his cover, for the wind would do that for him!

A fierce wind blew up and the sticking charm on Harry's hood ended just at that time, for in all of chaos Harry had forgot to reapply the spell...His hood blew off his head. Fear built in Harry's chest, though he had disguised his scar and eyes...he was still Harry Potter...Harry watched as the Order members slightly lowered their wands as shock filled their faces...all but for Dumbledore, whose eyes were twinkling oddly. Was he going to tell them? Harry took a step back...

He looked back over the edge that his right heel was dangling off of, it was a drop, could he jump?

"Harry...?" he heard Sirius breathe, yet Harry did not look back at him, it would only confirm things if he looked at his godfather when his name was spoken. Instead Harry peered over the edge thinking about jumping, it was only a three-story drop! Yet he decided against it...Thus Harry looked back at his friends.

When the Phoenix's hood blew off, Sirius was ready to identify him so he could torment him because of the things he said against Harry, yet he was not prepared for what he saw. His breath stopped upon seeing the boy's face because he was...a boy...Young, with dark black hair that swirled in the wind, dark eyes...black eyes...a face that held so much knowledge and cunning. Yet he was shocked that when the Phoenix's identity was revealed and the only name Sirius could come up with was...

"Harry...?" He looked so much like his late godson, the same pale long face, the messy hair, the same height...Yet his eyes were not bright green and there was no scar upon his forehead, yet he looked like Harry. Had Sirius not seen Harry fall through the Veil, he'd think it was him...with a few changes. Then the pain that welled in his chest upon seeing him....Then the anger set in. He could see Remus grit his teeth in anger as they others stared in shock.

"You bastard!" Sirius pointed his wand at the Phoenix, he saw Tonks and Dumbledore try to stop him but it was too late. The Phoenix was able to dodge the spell but it cut in arm. Harry winced, he hoped it wasn't Sectumsempra...Blood began to drip down his arm as he pulled his hood back on his head and tapped it with his wand. Sirius was blinded by anger as was Remus but the others...Tonks looked shocked as he watched both her and Moody try to comprehend what they just saw. Dumbledore, he knew already, he had tried to stop Sirius from attacking him.

"Sirius, do not attack him!" Dumbledore held out an arm as he slowly tried to get Sirius to back off. Sirius pulled away, his eyes flashing with anger.

"HE LOOKS LIKE HARRY! HE'S USING HARRY'S LOOKS TO GET TO US! I BET THIS IS NOT WHAT HE EVEN LOOKS LIKE!" Sirius pointed his wand at Harry again, Remus joined him. Tonks grabbed Remus's wrist and tried to pull his wand away from Harry.

"Remus...He is our ally! If he looks like Harry...maybe..." Tonks turned to look at him; she was putting two and two together...hopefully.

"Harry is dead and he..." Remus could not put into words his thoughts he was so angry. How dare he...if this was all a ruse by using Harry's image, this kid would die as soon as he was done with his mission! The Phoenix rolled his eyes.

"This is how I look Black! No potions or magic, this is how I look!" spat Harry trying to put some force behind his voice, "If I look like Potter than I cannot apologize for that! If I cause you pain then I'll keep my hood up!" Sirius moved forward, Harry had nowhere to go but down...Sirius then shot a spell at Harry. Harry tried to move out of the way, but the spell hit his already injured arm, he cried out.

Tonks gasped and tried to move forward but was held back by Moody.

Harry could see it in her eyes; she was putting the pieces together. Harry looked straight at her giving her such a look that it silenced whatever she was about to say. Tonks then shook her head; Harry gave her a small smile. He winked at her. Tonks blinked as he watched the cogs turn in her head.

"If you kill him Sirius..." said Dumbledore calmly, but forcefully, "You will regret it," Sirius snorted. Harry gripped his bleeding arm; he had no choice now he would have to...

Then he saw it, fly just overhead towards them. His Firebolt, his escape plan was here. Standing up Harry then gave the group a bow and with a smile said,

"I'm going to have to leave you now, gentlemen, lady..." Harry used his magic to direct the broom just under the edge of the building. Sirius raised his wand again.

"You're not..." Too late Harry leaned back as he fell off the building and with the skills of a seeker grabbed onto broom, hoisted himself up onto it and shot up into the sky. He heard Tonks scream and Sirius cry out. They then looked up to see the Phoenix, flying above them on a broomstick.

"See you later!" He saluted them, and then took off into the sky.

Sirius swore and threw down his wand. The next time they'd meet, that kid was dead. Dumbledore was smiling as he watched Harry fly away. He recognized that move instantly, just like the First Task...the Phoenix was Harry alright.

Now he truly needed to speak to the boy...

Note: Dun, dun, dunnnn! Look! I revealed Harry's identity as the Phoenix in a way but they did not believe it! Sirius's anger blinded him along with Remus but the others...Man, Harry better be careful if he runs into them again. Next up, Dumbledore and Harry have a little chat...with McGonagall and Snape in tow...

Chapter 22: Dumbledore and The Phoenix

Note: Here ya go The Talk...Sorry my muse has been dull. Thank you for your patience!

In the darkened sitting room of the former Potter house in Godric's Hollow a boy tossed and turned on the sofa, the sheets twisted and tangled around his thin form. Harry Potter spun in his sleep as images, sounds...memories flashed over his mind. Mixes of images of the present and the past. Gripping the sheets in terror his mouth opened in a silent scream as faces flashed before his eyes, dead and alive of those whom he loved. They were dying...again...no he could not let that happen! Not again! No, no, no, he was so close, two Horcruxes left...the snake and himself...he had to die...not them...

The fierce, adrenaline fueled look on his father's face as he bravely stood in front of Voldemort trying to buy his family more time to run. His mother's terror filled face as she bodily put herself in front of a murderer and her son. Cedric's brave face before he was killed, he had no time to even blink.

Watching his friends fall one by one as Death Eaters' attacked them in the Department. Hermione falling from a strange curse, Ron being attacked by the brains then falling to the floor. Ginny's broken ankle, Neville's bloody nose...Sirius's humor filled face as he was hit by the spell that pushed him through the Veil.

The saddened look on a weak Dumbledore's face as their eyes met before the Killing Curse hit him. Ron lying in his own blood, pain on his face as he splinched himself, his blood on both Harry and Hermione's hands. Hermione's pale; tear streaked face as Ron carried her out of the Malfoy Manor. Neville's bruised and bloodied face as he watched Harry leave for his death.

The Weasley family surrounding Fred's body...Remus and Tonks side by side in death...Snape's tight grip on his robes as they locked eyes...The bodies, the pain, the blood, tears...No, it had to stop! It had to stop NOW! He had to stop it!

"NO!" Harry bolted awake, sweat slick and cold going down his back. Breathing hard Harry's face fell into his hands as tears leaked out of the corners of his eyes. Between nightly flashes of what Voldemort

was doing intermingling with nightmares of the past. His past, the past he was trying tooth and nail to prevent. Two weeks had pasted since Harry had used Remus and Sirius to gain the cup Horcurx. Harry breathed out...

There were only two more left.

His death was so near that it made Harry's throat close, he wished... he wished he could see his friends again before...Harry shook his head, he shouldn't think like that it was too painful for all of them. With a sigh Harry rolled over and shut his eyes trying to go back to sleep. But adrenaline and his pounding heart kept Harry awake. With a sigh Harry stared up at the blank ceiling, it was now September the 19th as the clock rang midnight.

Two weeks had pasted since Harry had destroyed the cup Horcux. He gritted his teeth as Remus and Sirius's faces flashed before his eyes, the anger, and betrayal in their eyes. He wondered vaguely if Moody and Tonks now understood that the boy they saw was Harry. Hopefully they did, at this point he was willing to let them know if would convince Remus and Sirius not to kill him. Ever since then their faces haunted him, he hated himself for betraying them like that, but he had to. The Horcruxes had to be destroyed...He had to do it...It was the only way to ensure peace in this world...

Harry as rolled over he wished to the deepest depths of his soul he wished he could see his friends again, his loved ones. But he was so close now. If he showed himself now...it would be ten times more painful to walk away from them than now. But the temptation was there, the guilt and the fear, yes, the fear was there always gnawing at his soul. Just to hold their hands, to be in their arms only for an hour or two. For when he stepped away from this house to seek Nagini and Voldemort he was not coming back, not for a third time. Harry sighed as he imagined his friends, laughing, smiling the good times. Ron...Hermione...his first real friends...To kiss Ginny one more time.

The tears bottled in his eyes as the fear built in his chest as he bit back the tears plunging his face into the pillow. Why was this so hard? It seemed so easy when he had thought about it before...going it alone...As exhaustion and fear pulled Harry into sleep he knew unless fate enacted a miracle for him he'd never see them again...

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry-Headmaster's Office-
11:35 A.M.

Albus Dumbledore sat in his office pondering over the object that had caused so much trouble two weeks before. Harry had sent it to him within a week of destroying it. The boy had caused some trouble over this Horcrux. Dumbledore sighed, ever since then the Ministry and the Order were on the look out for the boy. He was sought after for advice on fighting Death Eaters, fame and revenge, in the case of those whom Remus and Sirius told what Harry had said against himself. Tonks and Moody after the confrontation spoke with Dumbledore privately. When Harry's hood flew off he had revealed himself. As Severus told him that Harry had disguised his scar and eyes but other than that, he was still Harry. Remus and Sirius's anger at the Phoenix, not Harry, had blinded them from the truth standing before them. The truth that Harry was alive.

Just this morning he sent Harry an owl that in two days he was to meet him at Hogsmede, they needed to talk. This had to end, even if...even if Dumbledore knew the only way to end this was for Harry to step in front of Voldemort and take the Killing Curse without a fight just like his mother...

With a sigh Dumbledore got to his feet as Fawkes gave off a soft note. Dumbledore smiled at the phoenix, it was painful to go day after day and see Harry's loved ones suffer his death when he knew the truth. The memories that Severus had shown him after Harry revealed his identity to him had put a lot of things into context...

Severus came into his office just past midnight, disheveled and angry. Dumbledore smiled at him as he watched him pace up and down the open floor of the office. Dumbledore sat down in his chair as he fixed himself and Severus a cup of tea.

"Something bothering you Severus?" Snape looked up and stopped pacing as he tried to find the words to workout what he was to say.

"I saw Potter," Dumbledore's head shot up, Harry had revealed himself to Severus, they both had disliked each other. Severus hated the fact that Harry was James Potter's son with Lily Evans. That he looked like his father with his mother's eyes, Severus always believed that Harry was a spoiled brat, who was like his

father. Many a time he tried to get the man to see that Harry may look like his father but his personality was like his mother. Harry...he disliked Snape because he did not understand what made his Professor hate him and Severus never stopped insulting his father.

"When, where?"

"Just now..."Dumbledore stood up, what was this? Snape continued to pace angrily up and down the floor. Dumbledore waited patiently Snape then stopped.

"I was summoned to a Death Eater meeting. When I arrived I had found Bellatrix had caught Lupin and Tonks," Dumbledore held his breath he hoped they were alright, they had been sent out on a mission for the Order. Seeing the headmaster's distress Snape rolled his eyes, "They are fine Dumbledore. It was at a graveyard in Little Hangleton...The Phoenix, Potter, was there, apparently he was after another Horcrux," Snape then dug into the pocket of his robes and pulled out a small shinning object. He placed it on Dumbledore's desk. With a shaking hand Dumbledore picked up the Horcrux. It could see it clearly, the second of the Deathly Hallows, the Resurrection Stone, the object Dumbledore had been looking for...for years. He could see a clear crack in the stone where Harry had stabbed it with the sword.

"Potter said to give it to you, he did not need it," Dumbledore looked at his spy with a puzzled look on his face, what did he mean by that? Snape then continued, "We were able to kill a few Death Eaters, the others fled. Once Lupin and Tonks left I tried to ascertain his identity...It was...odd...the last time I tried Occlumency on the boy, he failed immediately. But this time...he blocked me, he was strong. So strong that during a vision of the Dark Lord he could still block me..."

"A vision?" Snape waved a hand,

"Just of the Dark Lord's anger but it revealed everything, the boy's hood fell off and I saw his scar...it was bleeding...badly..." Dumbledore raised an eyebrow, bleeding?

"Bleeding? Harry's scar has pained him, given him visions but never bled. This is most odd indeed," Snape nodded.

"When I tried to get the boy to come with me—" Dumbledore smiled, Harry would not come with Snape, he still had a mission and he would name his own terms.

"You knew he would not, Severus," Snape sighed and glared at the man, did he want him to tell his story or not? Dumbledore fell silent.

"He used his magic to break away from me, then...then he showed me some memories...that he...he is the seventh Horcrux." Dumbledore froze, Harry knew? How? Snape glared at Dumbledore as he placed his wand to his temple and a small gleaming thread appeared which he placed into Dumbledore's Pensieve. Dumbledore was afraid to look but he had to....

The memories were detailed, brief, but detailed. He watched as people died one by one, including Dumbledore himself and Severus. The memories showed him that he would have died if he went after the ring Horcrux, foolish enough to wear it. Dying of a curse, an agreement with Severus to kill him in place of young Malfoy...the deaths of others whom Harry cared for...Harry's own death.

Harry had lived this life before and been given a second chance. That is why he knew everything...He was doing this to save everyone...

"Severus..." Dumbledore whispered, as he looked at his angry spy, "Harry..."

"You told me we were protecting him!" Dumbledore sighed, how had it come to this? "That for Lily's sake we were protecting him and now the boy must die? The Killing Curse that...that first time in the forest did not kill the Horcrux within him, so he still is one isn't he?" Dumbledore could understand why he was mad, he had promised to keep Harry safe and now...

"It must be done, Harry knows that..." At least he no longer had the burden of telling the boy his fate now, he knew it already...

"Must I kill you, as in Potter's memories?" sneered Snape, "There is no slow curse killing you now, but must I still kill you?" Dumbledore shook his head, this was all too much he would have to speak with Harry himself and soon....

"I understand you are upset Severus, but Voldemort must use the Killing Curse against Harry in order to rid Harry of the Horcrux once and for all..." Snape glared at him as he muttered something about betrayal and Potter before disappearing out of the office. This would not be the last conversation they would have about this subject.

Dumbledore had to talk to Harry, he must. Dumbledore had a theory that the Killing Curse would only destroy the piece of Voldemort's soul...but if he was wrong, it if in order to destroy Tom once and for all it would cost Harry his life as well. Dumbledore shook his head, this needed to be settled now....

Godric's Hollow-1:30 P.M.

Harry groaned as he read Dumbledore's letter. He wanted to meet in Hogsmede, only a simple walk to Hogwarts, in two days time at ten o'clock. If Dumbledore wanted to stop him from returning to Godric's Hollow, he could easily then drag him to the castle. The castle...his home...it would be so easy to lead him there and he'd never want to leave again...Harry bit his lip, he had to go. Surely it had to be important if Dumbledore wanted to meet him. With a sigh Harry wrote a swift reply on the back of the letter agreeing to the date and time.

Within two days it was the appointed time, ten o'clock in the evening at Hogsmede. Though it was a Saturday the students would be long gone from their afternoon at Hogsmede. Only a few witches and wizards were around and they barely glanced at Harry. Harry kept his hood low, he came as himself this time, not as the Phoenix. He slipped inside the Three Broomsticks and ordered a Butterbeer while he waited, it was getting close to the appointed time and it was not like Dumbledore to be late...

Up at the castle Dumbledore gathered his cloak as he stepped out of his office. The castle was quiet at this time of night. Fifth years and older students were given until nine o'clock to be out of their dorms, by now, they should all be in bed. The ghost patrolled the castle, as they were now to do with the threat of Voldemort on the loose. The presence of Aurors, mostly members of the Order of the Phoenix, did not calm the tense atmosphere of the school.

Dumbledore sighed, the happy days were gone and when they were to return no one knew. Yet he was looking forward to this little chat

with Harry. He had not seen him since last term and from what Severus told him, he had changed greatly. Dumbledore was sure of that, after seeing Harry's memories he had to be. Dumbledore then heard footsteps behind him; curious he turned around...to see McGonagall and Snape were on his heels.

"Dumbledore, where do you think you are going at this time of night?" asked Minerva, crossing her arm over her chest. Dumbledore smiled at her. Snape looked annoyed, he probably told her he was going out tonight. And now he was getting dragged along too.

"Are you monitoring my comings and goings too, Minerva?" There was a slight smile on his face, she watched everyone like a hawk especially now. Ever since Harry's 'death' she kept a close eye on her students, especially on Harry's friends. Minerva clearly did not want to lose another student to this monster. He needed to leave, Harry was waiting for him. She frowned at him.

"It's just not like you to sneak out like this, especially now, where are you going Albus?" she asked again, Snape smirked.

"I'm going to see the Phoenix, there are some...issues I wish to discuss with him," McGonagall blinked and Snape frowned. He was off to see Potter? About what? What the next step was after destroying the Horcruxes? The boy knew that already!

"You certainly will not be going alone Albus. Severus and I will come with you," Dumbledore's eyes twinkled as he gave her a small smile. After Harry's 'death' she had been more protective of her students and colleges alike. Snape shot her a dirty look, he did not want to get involved in this business with Potter, hell, he already was!

"Minerva are you—" She shot Snape a look that reminded him of his school days and he swallowed his words, never mess with Minerva McGonagall! With a sigh Dumbledore agreed to let them come, besides it was time Minerva learned the truth anyway...

Harry tapped his foot to a soft violin playing in the background; the Three Broomsticks was full of witches and wizards discussing the war, Voldemort, the Death Eaters and Ministry's attempts to stop them. Like last time the Ministry was failing miserably. Only the Aurors and the Magical Law Enforcement was trying their hardest to

fight while the rest of the Ministry ran around like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off. Harry snorted, at least the Ministry was depending on the Order and Dumbledore more and more, and that was working somewhat.

Stretching, Harry put the money on the table for his drink and pulled his hood lower over his face. Many people these days wore their hoods up, so Harry was not out of place. No one even questioned him or asked who he was. Harry had to be careful, he had come as himself today. No glamour charm, make-up or contacts, he was Harry Potter again, not the Phoenix. With a sigh Harry walked outside as the cool fall breeze brushed his face. Where was Dumbledore surely he would be here by now.

"This is ridiculous, Albus, people are suspicious of him now. The Ministry is trying to hunt him down and after what Sirius told me...he does not..." Harry turned to see Dumbledore....with Snape and McGonagall with him. Harry groaned, he promised to come alone yet these two had to come? Geezzz...He guessed they had come at McGonagall's request for Snape clearly looked as if he did not want to come! Harry ducked behind the building and made sure his hood was low.

"I thought we had an agreement you would come alone..." Harry then walked out from behind the building, "But I guess not..." Dumbledore smiled at him as he gave his professors a bow. Snape sneered at him, while McGonagall blinked a few times upon seeing him.

"You...you are just a child..." Harry straightened up.

"Everyone says that...now, follow me, we need to be away from here, there may be spies watching us," Harry then led them toward the caves where he, Ron and Hermione had met Sirius after the First Task.

Once they reached the safety of the cave, Dumbledore lit a small fire. In the dim light he could see only the lower half of Harry's face. Harry leaned against the cave wall.

"This place is pretty isolated, we should be safe here," McGonagall stepped forward, her wand in her hand, though she did not raise it.

"Who are you?" Harry smiled, he looked at her. She seemed suspicious, nervous even which was odd for her.

"I am the Phoenix, who else would I be?" Snape rolled his eyes and jabbed his wand in Harry's direction, why he had his wand out he had no idea!

"Cut it out, Potter," spat Snape, Harry turned to face his professor with a scowl. McGonagall looked sharply at Snape, her eyes flashing.

"What on earth are you talking about, Severus? Harry is..." Harry smiled as he looked to Dumbledore for permission.

"Dead?" inquired Harry for her, McGonagall turned to look at him. She opened her mouth to scold him, when Harry took off his hood. He watched his professor's eyes widen as she gasped. Her hand reached out and clutched the stone walls to steady herself as her other hand clapped over her heart. Harry smiled at her, as she looked him up and down, breathing hard.

"What-what...Albus...what?" Dumbledore rested a hand on her shoulder, with a bright smile. She turned to look at the Headmaster in shock then back to Harry. Harry then gave her a brief bow.

"Hello, Professor," McGonagall looked at Dumbledore again then turned to Harry. She slowly walked towards Harry, her wand gripped in her hand, the other reaching out. Harry did not turn away from her as she touched his face. Her hand sprung back in shock when she realized Harry was flesh and blood.

"How...how, Albus?" she looked over her shoulder. Dumbledore smiled as he stepped forward, gesturing to Harry.

"His parents' spirits helped him survive the Veil and return to the world of the living..." McGonagall watched him for a moment before turning back to Harry. She reached out and brushed his bangs away to show his scar. He watched as a smile came across her face.

"Potter?" Harry nodded, "What did I promise you last year?" Harry grinned, she was checking to make sure it was him, which was easy.

"That you'd do whatever you'd have to get me in as an Auror..." He watched her eyes brighten fully in recognition then in a flash her face turned furious. Harry then got a sound rap on the top of his head from her wand.

"What on earth were you thinking, Potter?" Harry groaned as he rubbed his head where she hit him, "Making us all think you were dead! What possessed you to think that was the only option, Potter?"

"I'm sorry I had to! The Horcruxes have to be destroyed! I'm the only one who can do it without arousing Voldemort's suspicions!" Out of the corner of his eyes he saw Snape smile at Harry being punished. He shot Snape a look, he better watch it! He knew all of his secrets now!

"You could have told the Order, not just the Headmaster!" she argued putting her hands on her hips as she usually did when she was angry, "Do you realize how many people have...are...mourning your death? How many people you've hurt? You are causing more harm than good Potter, despite your noble intentions!" Harry sighed as he lifted his hand off his head to check for blood. There was none. He looked to Dumbledore for help, but he just smiled at him. He was on his own.

"There was no time! Besides...it's better if everyone thinks I am dead. I've stolen five of Voldemort's seven Horcruxes right from under his nose! He has no clue what I am doing. No one can imagine the 'dead' Harry Potter killing his Horcruxes!" Harry sighed as he began to pace the cave as his fears and justifications came spilling out of his mouth.

"If I told everyone, someone could use Legilimency and see I was alive. They then can be tortured and killed to learn where I was...It's better that they think I am dead...Besides...I don't want to see anyone get killed because of me..." Harry turned away as his memories flashed before his eyes. He felt pressure on the back of his head, probably Snape. Harry concentrated hard; he had somewhat mastered Occlumency during his Horcrux hunt in the past by focusing on his loved ones. But with weeks and weeks to himself he trained hard to master it. Master it well enough that he could block Snape out.

"Cut it out, Snape!" he shouted rounding on him. McGonagall shot him a look as Snape lowered his wand.

"What are you doing?" she asked sharply as Harry looked away towards Dumbledore.

"He's testing me, trying to see if my Occlumency shields can hold." Harry then turned to look fully at Dumbledore, he had enough of this. His letter told him his headmaster wanted to speak with him and here he was. They needed to get this over with.

"So, Professor, I guess you didn't call me here for pleasantries," McGonagall gasped, this was not the Harry Potter she had seen in her class hours before he ran off with his friends to the Department. He was no longer carefree; he was serious and determined, set on his goal. Of course he was like that most of the time, but...he was different, more mature...

Dumbledore smiled at Harry as he gestured for them to take a walk outside the cave.

"Of course, Harry, of course. Minerva, Severus, you may return to the castle, if we need you we shall call you," McGonagall opened her mouth as if to say something then closed it. She understood. Snape rolled his eyes; he had been brought out here for nothing.

"I guess I should fill you in on current events, Harry," Harry raised a hand as they strolled away from Snape and McGonagall, placing it on Dumbledore's shoulder.

"I've been keeping an eye on the Ministry and Death Eaters..."

"No, no, my boy, events around your friends..." Harry's head shot up, Dumbledore smiled at him, that spark was in his eye. "Unless you have been sneaking into Hogwarts..." Harry licked his dry lips; he was desperate, yes, desperate to hear any news about his friends. Harry nodded eagerly as he looked up at Dumbledore, the old man smiled back.

"Well, let me see...In the announcements column," Harry snorted, Dumbledore was going to give this a newspaper metaphor, lovely, "The engagement of Bill Weasley and Fleur Delacour..." Harry smiled, he had already known that was coming, he had witnessed their

wedding for goodness sake! Dumbledore watched the smile form on Harry's lips as he nodded, he knew that was coming.

"In the gossip column, Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley are currently dating..." Harry smiled and snorted at the same time, wow, that was fast! It took them the Lav-Lav and Won-Won situation with a near fatal poisoning...Months on the road facing danger to realize at last they loved each other! But Harry's death and prospect of war did that for them. Harry gloomily thought of Ginny, was she now dating Dean? Did she even think of him?

"Also, as you might have guessed, Tonks and Remus are dating, for quite a few months, from what I hear from Sirius it is well...serious..."

Harry grinned, Dumbledore smiled at him as they walked towards the Forbidden Forest. Harry could see Hogwarts in the distance, they were on school grounds now, if he needed to escape he would need to run...fast.

"What else?" asked as he lit his wand. Harry stopped at the edge of the forest; he did not want to go in there. Memories...the Killing Curse...Voldemort. Dumbledore looked at him then at the forest then gave a sad smile.

"Of course, sorry, Harry, I did not mean to reawaken old memories," Harry looked oddly at his mentor then realized, Snape must have told him everything, no surprise there.

"You know?" Dumbledore nodded sadly, but then quickly waved a hand as if to brush away the sad memories.

"Let's see, the newest club, or well...a hidden club now in the open is one of the most popular clubs Hogwarts has ever seen. Can you guess Harry?" Harry frowned he could not think of any real clubs at Hogwarts except the Dueling Club in second year but that did not last very long.

"Dumbledore's Army..." Harry's head shot up as he looked at his professor in amazement. They continued Dumbledore's Army? Last time when there was no Umbridge to defy they had dropped the little club, only using the Dumbledore's Army coins when there were

battles to fight. How on earth...Dumbledore smiled at Harry's shocked expression.

"They continued it?" he asked in a breathless voice, Ron and Hermione...had they done this...for him.

"Yes, your friends insisted on continuing it in your memory. It has quite a following these days. If remember the current number of members it is at...two hundred and seventy-five students currently..." Harry's jaw dropped, that many people had joined Dumbledore's Army only in the first few weeks of school? Well Harry could not be too surprised with the Ministry announcing Voldemort's return, anyone and everyone wanted to learn how to defend themselves.

"Who is teaching?" asked Harry, surely there had to be some teachers involved with the program. Dumbledore smiled as Harry leaned against a tree as his head was spinning from the revelation.

"Professors McGonagall and Snape over see everything," Harry rolled his eyes, the only reason Snape was involved was because he was now the DADA professor, oh joy! "But it is your friends who teach everything and might I add, they do quite a superb job. They say they all take after how you taught them," said Dumbledore with a smile, placing a hand on Harry's shoulder. Harry smiled, it sounded as if his friends were doing fine without him and he had to admit that hurt a little. "But they do miss you, very much Harry, everyone does. Your 'death' hit them all hard." Harry nodded as he felt tears build in his eyes.

"Now let's get down to business," Harry then looked up at Dumbledore, wondering how much Dumbledore knew already. With Snape telling him everything about Harry's past life and Snape being the spy for the Order....

"Do you know, Professor of the plot to kill you?" Dumbledore nodded, his brow firmed, how they were going to prevent that from happening was unclear. Severus was trying to see what plans Draco had for getting the Death Eaters inside Hogwarts, but he was having a hard time. It seemed his aunt Bellatrix had taught him Occlumency over the summer and not even Snape could break his defenses.

"That I learned of sometime during the summer, we are trying to foil Mr. Malfoy's plans but he is not giving anything away." Harry straightened up as looked over his shoulder at Hogwarts; he knew what was going to happen.

"I know...In the Room of Requirement there is a broken Vanishing Cabinet that is connected to a sister cabinet in Borgin and Burkes in Knockturn alley. Draco is slowly repairing it so that by June the Death Eaters can successfully enter Hogwarts." Dumbledore stared at Harry for a moment then nodded, yes that did make sense, all other secret passageways to the castle had been sealed off by the staff before term started.

"Are you sure?" Harry felt his throat tighten, he had seen it all happen before his very eyes, he had watched this man die before his eyes...yes he was sure. He still could not speak so he nodded. Dumbledore then began to pace as he fitted together what he knew with Harry's information.

"Thank you, Harry, we will make sure to remove the Cabinet from Hogwarts," Harry felt the memories of that night flash before his eyes that it made his throat burn.

"Destroy it!" he shouted, "Don't take it away, destroy it! That way it may never be used again!" Dumbledore turned to look at Harry, he could see the pain and anger in eyes, oh, yes, what Severus had told him was true. Harry had watched him die.

"Easy Harry calm down. I know your memories conflict with your emotions but you must remain calm." Harry sighed he was right, when he got angry, Voldemort could sense him. He did not need that right now. Harry took a few deep breaths as he allowed himself to calm down. He then opened his eyes, running his fingers through his hair.

"Is there anything else I should know?" Harry pondered over the memories that he had. Slowly he began to talk about the Ministry take-over, Hogwarts being controlled by the Death Eaters with Snape in charge. Events, people, places began to spill from his mouth as he thought back to his sixth year and the year he had spent on the run with Ron and Hermione. After mulling over in his head several times to double check he had everything he was done.

"That is everything I can remember. If I remember anything more, I'll send you an owl..." Dumbledore nodded in agreement, Harry watched as he turned his back to him. They remained silent for a few moments, then Dumbledore turned to face him. He looked just as he did the night Harry 'died', it made Harry's heart tighten.

"What is your next step, dear boy?" Harry rubbed the back of his neck as his gut swirled. They both knew what was coming next. Dumbledore wanted to keep him here a little longer...and yet Harry wanted to stay a little longer too. He felt safe...

"Well...once I pin-point Voldemort's position I will go after Nagini, she is around him all the time now. But luckily she won't be in a shield like last time then...Once the snake is dead..." Harry turned to face the man he had been mad at for half a year but no more. He understood everything now and he did not blame him. "You know what the last Horcrux is, don't you sir?" Dumbledore looked at him sadly, meeting his eyes.

"My dear boy I have known that, to my great shame, for quite some time. If you are angry at me, you have the right to be," Harry shrugged which surprised Dumbledore.

"Not anymore. When I first learned the truth I was, but I understand now. You were right...in my time, after...after Sirius died. You showed me the Prophecy, I was angry with you. Blaming you for ignoring me, not helping me, for Sirius's death...for not telling me the truth the first time. You told me, you cared about me too much that you wanted me to be happy and carefree instead of carrying a burden of knowing that either Voldemort or I would have to kill each other in the end. I am...grateful for that now that I look back. I was able to be a kid for a little awhile and not carry the burden of destiny on my shoulders as I do now. I was able to have fun, make friends, make mistakes, share in defeats and victories without that weight on my shoulders. I was angry, but no more, I am very...very grateful now."

Seeing the grief and pain on Harry's face Dumbledore moved forward to comfort him but Harry took a step back. He was trying to hide his pain. Dumbledore then and there debated with himself to tell Harry his theory about the Horcrux inside of him. But what would happen if his theory was wrong? He was human, despite many thinking he was greatest wizard of age with great wisdom and

knowledge, no, he too was human and made mistakes. If told Harry and Harry could not come back, he feared the boy would hate him forever. That hope could be his downfall. No, he would not tell him.

Harry blinked a few tears out of his eyes, it was true. He was grateful, it was only natural to be angry that he had been betrayed, and deceived for years but now he understood it all. Oncoming death makes you re-think things. Harry then began to back away from Dumbledore, he was done. He told him everything that he knew, Harry had no more secrets. If he stayed any longer, he could not leave...he wouldn't want to...Harry gave his headmaster a deep bow.

"But now I must leave, I cannot stay any longer or I will not want to leave, sir. Please don't worry about me...I know I what I am doing and what I must do. You will find the sword with my body when..." Harry swallowed; it was so close...so close...

"Just do me two favors," Dumbledore nodded, his eyes dark by now.

"Anything, I swear..." Harry chuckled as he remembered Dumbledore making him swear to follow his orders when they went to the cave. Harry ducked his head for a moment to block out the tears.

"One: make sure the Death Eaters don't take my body...return it to my friends...Two: tell them why I did this. I know it will be hard for them to understand once I am dead..." Dumbledore nodded as Harry pulled up his hood and with a deep breath, turned away from his professor.

"Good-bye Professor...you know...after Sirius and Remus...I considered you the closest thing I had to a father-figure. Thank you for everything..." With that Harry ran towards Hogsmede, tears streaming down his face. He had said good-bye to his mentor but would fate let him say good-bye to his friends? Only Fate knew that. Once Harry was away from the school grounds he Apparated away before he could change his mind about staying...

End Note: Come on say it with me: AWWWWWW! Well McGonagall knows but who will be next to learn the truth? Yes, Tonks and Moody know who Harry is now. I think Tonks is trying to convince Sirius and Remus that Harry is alive, but they think she'd gone mad

for a little bit! Therapy anyone? Next up: Harry says good-bye world and goes after Nagini and his own death but...as we all know with Harry things will not go smoothly. Watch out the Order and the D.A. are on his tail! Will they finally find out the truth? P.S. school is coming to an end and the chapters will be slow coming.

Chapter 23: Nagini

Harry sat quietly in the broken upstairs room that was once his; a soft autumn breeze came through the room ruffling Harry's hair along with the broken curtains that lay on the floor. Gripped in Harry's hand was the Gryffindor sword. Sitting on the floor before him was a picture of his parents at their wedding...Today was October the 30th, tomorrow he'd leave this house forever, to face his destiny. Voldemort. To die the death his parents' had died. Oddly enough on the day they died, the day he should have died on sixteen years ago...He never planned for tomorrow to be the day he would die...

Harry leaned his forehead against the cold metal of the sword hilt. Harry's fingers curled around the hilt and the blade. His breath was coming in fast and hard, he had spent some time trying to find Voldemort's whereabouts but they changed daily and weekly, never in the same place, usually attacking Muggles and wizards alike. Finally he was in one place, a small town, a forest...He was going to end where he began...a damn forest!

Death had been on Harry's mind for weeks now and it would surely drive him mad at this point. But he could not let that get him, he just could not. With a sigh Harry got to his feet, grabbing the picture frame and pulling the sword along with him. The house was quiet and to Harry as he thought back long and hard these past few days, that's what it was like before tragedy had struck his family, quiet and peaceful, though the tension was there. If he thought really hard he could find blurs of memories from his childhood. There had been laughter and play in the house but there was an underlying tension always. The tension that at any moment Voldemort would come for them...that he did remember...

With a sigh Harry laid out his things for tomorrow, packing what little clothing and possessions that he had. He did not know what he'd do with his remaining clothes. He planned on sending them to Sirius with Hedwig on her last journey to him. He had expected her to come today he'd send her off with his things. He laid out his Phoenix clothes, the wand belt, the Auror belt, and his Cloak out on the table. He fingered his wand for a moment; he would soon have no more use for it.

He laid out the sword on the table along with a photo he had found in the house. The picture was one he had found on the wall. It was of his parents and himself as a baby at Christmas time. Behind the couch was the tree glittering with gentle lights, glowing orbs and moving ornaments. Lily was leaning against her husband, James's arm around her shoulders, the other holding Harry's hand. Lily had Harry on her lap, her arm around his torso. His baby self was waving at the camera with his free hand. Harry felt tears build in eyes, they were happy; they had no idea of what was coming. Harry took the photo out of the frame and put it into the pants pocket he would wear tomorrow. He'd be with them...soon...

Harry thought that made things better but it did not. He tried to think about his friends but that did not help either. It was painful to think of them, he wanted more than anything to run away from fate. To deny that what he had to do was crazy. The last time he barely managed to wrap his mind around it because it was what he had to do to save his friends. But now this time he had time to think about what he was about to do. That he was to walk unarmed to Voldemort to die. He would never see his friends again. Despite the fact he wished he could sneak into Hogwarts and spy on them for a little while, saying good-bye while he watched. But more or less he wanted to face them to just hold them, talk to them. But he knew he could not. He would not walk to Voldemort, they would let him nor he would not do it.

With a sigh Harry turned out the lights with a swish of his wand. Covering himself with his blankets, Harry laid his head down to sleep for the last time. Oddly enough he fell straight to sleep and slept without a nightmare or a dream. Just peaceful sleep. When he awoke the next morning he could barely explain it other than, he was ready, he had no fears, no regrets, he had a mission to complete.

Godric's Hollow-October 31th, 1996-8:15 A.M.

That morning there was a cold rain and the wind blew. As Harry ate breakfast, his last one, the colorful leaves swirled standing out against the gray sky as the wind rapped against the windows. A soft hoot caught Harry's attention. Soaking wet sitting on the table was Hedwig, she hooted happily at him. Harry gave her a gentle pat on the head, at least he'd get to spend some time with her before...She gave him her full attention that morning as he dressed, he talked to

her in a hushed monotone and tried to seem normal. Yet it was not normal at all.

How long they sat there talking, Harry gently rubbing her head, talking, Harry did not know. The clock rang 11:00, realizing the time Harry gathered his backpack and handed it to Hedwig. She blinked at him, she had carried things much heavier than this, but it seemed as if she wondered why he did not need it anymore.

"It's not safe to stay here anymore, Hedwig. I have to move," Hedwig cocked her head to one side as if to say, 'Then why are you giving me your stuff? Won't you need it?' He only chuckled at her, she was quite amusing at sometimes. But he hoped she would accept his answer to why she was to take his things away.

"Take them to someone...it does not matter who..." He gently patted her head as she hooted softly back, "Don't come back here okay? Stay with Ron," The owl bobbed her head in acceptance as she clasped the bag in her talons and flapped her wings. Harry sighed in relief she had accepted his story. Good. With a nip on the finger, he watched her fly off into the gray sky. The rain had ceased for the time being which meant she would not have fight the wind and the rain to reach wherever she was going. With a sigh Harry strapped on his Auror belt, wand belt, the sword and threw his robe and cloak over his shoulders. No more disguises, no more alias, today he was Harry Potter again and was going to remain so.

He would die as Harry, he would make sure of that.

Slowly Harry walked around the house again, running his hands over the walls, looking at everything for one last time. Taking in every little detail, it was painful for him, on this house, on this day, everything changed. Everything would change again and hopefully this time for the better. That with his...death...someone, anyone could kill Voldemort and end his reign of terror. With a sigh Harry locked up the house, checked to make sure he had everything and for the final time, walked away from the house...for good.

Godric's Hollow Graveyard-12:00 P.M.

Thunder and lightning flashed in the distance, Harry grinned at the literal metaphor as he rubbed his lightning bolt scar. Harry remembered walking these very streets at Christmas Eve with

Hermione, this road led to the graveyard. A chilly wind blew around Harry as he entered the graveyard through the metal gates at the entrance. By now he knew the path way to his parents' grave, he'd been here several times now. He finally found it, the marble tomb glittering in the rain.

A shiver ran down Harry's spine as his eyes flickered to his own marble tomb. He already had one foot in the grave already, only the date was wrong...No matter the day would match the one on his parents' tomb, the 31st October. Only...the year would be different, sixteen years of borrowed time, seventeen in his original time. It did not matter anymore. Voldemort would soon be dead and Harry too.

With a graceful drop, Harry knelt before his parents' grave. His fingers reached out and traced his parents' names, dates of birth and death, much as Sirius had done on that rainy day in June. Yet the stone was wet and cold to his already numb fingers. Tears bottled in his eyes as he remembered meeting them behind the Veil. He had lied straight to their faces and now that tucked away guilt was eating at his soul as raw as any other piece of guilt he carried. A choked sob fell from his lips; he slapped his hand over his mouth in an effort to quiet himself.

He could not cry, he would not allow himself. If he shed a single tear and sobbed out his regrets and guilt he would never ever move forward. He'd be stuck in a world of swirling guilt that only approaching death can bring. He could not cry.

"Hi, mum...dad..." he whispered to the earth, despite knowing whatever was left of them was bone, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry but I lied to you. I cannot live much longer; you gave me sixteen years of borrowed time to complete the Prophecy...it is near complete. I...I am the last Horcrux, in order to seal Voldemort's fate I must...die..." Harry sat back on his knees and looked up toward the darkening sky, clouds swirling about his head.

"I'm sorry for everything for the deception, lies, but I had to, to protect everyone I love. To save everyone. I would die if any of them died again...I can't...I don't want to die...but...I must..." The sky screamed in protest as thunder and lightning streaked across the sky. Harry was not just talking to his parents wherever they were, but letting his guilt come loose. One cannot go to their deaths with a heavy conscience...

"I have to die! It is the only way!" he shouted to the sky. With a crash of thunder, rain started to pour. Harry leaned back and closed his eyes; it was as if his guilt, his sins were washing away with the rain. The rain was the tears he could not shed. Harry knelt there in the mud for God only knows how long. Allowing the rain to take his pain away, he felt lighter, easier, he was not afraid. He truly no longer seemed afraid; he could now face death head on and not even blink. Harry opened his eyes; he was soaked to the bone but did not care.

Getting to his feet, Harry whirled his wand and just Hermione on that cold Christmas Eve night conjured a ring of white roses. How he did it, he was not sure, only that he did. He placed the flowers on the ground. With a swift movement Harry pulled out the Gryffindor sword and raised it in salute to his parents, to his friends, loved ones. He would be brave just like Lily and James been before him, ready to die to save the ones they loved. So Harry would too be. He would make them proud, by standing proud and ready at his final hour.

Lowering the sword, the silver blade reflected the flashes of lighting overhead. A fitting tribute, a fitting element...Harry sheathed the sword and then looked up at the lighted sky.

"I'm coming..."

And with a loud crack he was gone, leaving the roses in place before his parents' tomb. It wouldn't be long now...that'd he'd be with them...

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry-1:15 P.M. Great Hall

Ron Weasley rested on his arms, as he stared blurry eyed at the food on his plate, gray, rainy days such as today made him sleepy. Though his stomach was growling with hunger his sleepiness was winning.

"Ron?" asked Hermione, "Are you alright?" Ron looked up the bushy haired girl with an odd expression.

"It's a rainy day, it's making me sleepy," Hermione scowled as she looked back to her Herbology book, stabbing at her carrots with her fork.

"It's fall in England Ronald, it always rains," Ron groaned as he sat up and started to play with his sausages. Ginny was smiling at him with an odd look in her eyes; Ron scowled back at his sister. Ginny rolled her eyes.

"Hey guys, sorry I'm late but Professor Sprout needed a hand with the Venus Flytraps," said Neville as he threw himself next to Ginny and began to fill his plate.

"It's alright Neville," said Hermione not even looking up from her book. Ron shot her a look, why was she still studying like mad? O.W.L.S. were over, thank God, the months and months of intense studying was over along with the reign of the Bitch. Ron then looked down at his food again. Hermione was starting to rub off on him. They started dating near the end of September. Though...they only went on two dates, only held hands...

Yet his...girlfriend was influencing him in ways he was just starting to understand. He was more organized with being the unofficial Gryffindor Quidditch captain. Ron never took the title though during matches we wore the captain's badge. He forbade the team from calling him captain, that title solely belonged to Harry. Also he studied more, but he knew the reason behind that too. Harry. He did not have his best mate to help yank him from the monotone of studying.

When their O.W.L.S arrived in July Hermione was near hysterical with fear, despite she was still in a deep depression over Harry's death. She had received top marks of an O in everything but Defense Against the Dark Arts, which she received, an E. Ron's were satisfactory, he had earned more than Fred and George combined. Sirius was at the house that day for a visit at Dumbledore's instructions to pull him out of Number 12 and his grief. As the owls came in Ron wondered why there were three owls not two. It was until the owl landed in front of Sirius did he understand why, Sirius was to one to receive of Harry's O.W.L.S for his dead godson. He remembered the dark look on Sirius's face as he started at the envelope. Ron remembered his stomach turning over as both Remus and his mother asked that if he did not want to open it then they would. Yet Sirius had shrugged them off and slowly opened the letter.

Ron remembered holding his breath; Sirius by that time was starting to pull out of his depression and grief over Harry's death. Anything about his late godson, a comment, picture even the damn O.W.L.S scores could pull him back down. Sirius read the letter several times. He then watched the first real smile appear on his haunted face in a mouth.

"How did he do?" asked Molly in a near whisper. Remus leaned over Sirius's shoulder and read them.

"He did well, not as well as James or Lily did but very well," Molly smiled as Sirius offered it to Ron and Hermione.

"Are you sure?" asked Hermione, Sirius nodded.

"I know he'd share them with you two..." Thus with a shaky hand Ron reached out and took the paper from Sirius. Harry did do well; he got an O in DADA, not a surprise. Ron remembered smiling as Hermione pouted that Harry had got a higher score than her...Ron sighed as he pushed around the peas on his plate. They were already near the end of the second month of school and the reality that Harry was not with them still had not worn off.

It probably never will...

There was a sudden flutter of wings as the afternoon post came in. Though post mainly came in the morning, sometimes late owls came in around lunch. Yet today a fluffy, wet white owl landed right in front of Ron, scaring him. With a whoosh of white Ron yelled in surprise pulling him from his thoughts, causing him to fall off the bench.

"Ron!" cried his friends as students from the other tables, mainly Slytherin laughed. Ron sat up with Hermione's help, shaking his spinning head.

"Bloody owl!" spat Ron, glaring at the white owl, which he quickly realized was Hedwig. He then felt slightly guilty about insulting Harry's owl, which Ron and his friends saw as a still living connection to their dead friend.

"Hedwig what on earth are you doing here?" asked Ginny leaning over the table to see what she had brought for them. Usually she did

not come down to see them in the Great Hall unless she had something for them.

"What's that?" asked Dean, noticing that Hedwig had dropped a bag at Ron's feet, "Ron is that your bag?" Ron stood up, rubbing the lump on his head.

"No, mine's in the common room, what?" Ron reached down and picked up. Neville and Ginny cleared a place for it as Luna skipped over.

"Nice fall Ron," Ron scowled at the blonde Ravenclaw, "What's that?"

"Don't know," said Ron as they laid the bag on the table. It was clearly a school bag that all students were required to have for school.

"Did you ask Mum for extra stuff?" asked Ginny, knowing that Hedwig now spent most of her time between the Burrow and Hogwarts now that Harry was dead.

"No," said Ron shaking his head, "Did you?" Ginny too shook her head. Blinking down at the bag, Ron turned it over looking for a name; maybe Hedwig brought one of the twins's old bags by mistake. Turning over the strap he found the nametag near the end of the strap. Leaning in Ron could see a name...in familiar handwriting. Not of his siblings or parents but of his dead best friend.

The tag read, 'Harry J. Potter'

Ron pushed away from the table, the color draining from his face. This was Harry's bag. Ron had wondered where it went. When Harry's friends looked through his things they had found his bag was gone. At first they thought Harry had misplaced it in all of the excitement of the night, but could never find it. They suspected someone stole it, which pissed Ron off to the extreme. But here it was.

"Ron? Ron? What's wrong?" asked Hermione as she touched Ron's shoulders in comfort and worry. Ron pointed at the bag with a shaking hand stuttering,

"R-read it..." Curious his friends leaned in and read the name. They pulled away gasping and shaking.

"It's...it's Harry's missing bag..." whispered Neville as he slumped onto the bench. Ginny's hands formed fists as she began to get red in the face, who would dare? Hermione pulled out her wand as she whispered a number of spells under breath. She was trying to determine if the bag was a fake, a trick. But it was not. She pulled away with a hand over her mouth.

"It's real...I'd know Harry's handwriting, anywhere..." Ron sucked in a breath and slowly walked to bag reaching out for the zipper to see the contents, though he really did not wish to.

"Wait," Neville seized his hand, giving the bag a fierce look, "It could be a trap, a Portkey or something. We should give it to a Professor," Ron looked at Neville in shock; Hermione had just determined it was really Harry's bag. But slowly it made since, it could been stolen and may be used by the Death Eaters to lure them into a trap...just like the Department of Mysteries. Ron slowly retracted his hand.

"Neville's right, Wingardium Leviosa!" cried Hermione, slowly the bag rose before her. With a quick pace she left the Great Hall with a number of people looking at her oddly. Not knowing whom to go to, Hermione told herself she'd give to the first professor she saw. Though in the back of her head she knew she should take it to Professor Snape. Though the Order trusted Snape, Harry's friends did not trust him. Not after the Department of Mysteries incident. Though they had learned it was Snape who contacted the Order to go after them, Snape seemed aloof with Harry's warning about Sirius. Not to mention, he did not try to stop them or have someone else do so. In Ron's mind, despite Hermione telling him he was wrong, her boyfriend believed Snape had sent Harry to his death.

Despite Hermione's better judgment she blamed a part of Harry's death on Snape as well as Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Though Harry did not reveal why Snape had stopped his lessons, he did. Harry did not 'master' Occlumency at all as Harry had told them. Sirius said it had to do with petty jealousy and a grudge against Harry's father was the reason Snape had been so harsh on Harry all these years but Hermione did not believe it until the night Harry died. For whatever reason Snape hated Harry for he a duty to protect him and teach him. In Hermione's mind had Snape continued the

lessons with Harry and pushed Harry to practice harder he would have never gone to the Department and died. Therefore, she was very uncomfortable about taking one of Harry's personal possessions to him.

She was in luck for the first professor she ran into was Professor McGonagall. She sighed with relief she would not have to take it Snape and they trusted their Head of House.

"Professor!" shouted Hermione, running forward. Professor McGonagall turned and smiled at one of her brightest students. She then looked oddly at the bag hovering in front of Miss Granger.

"What on earth Miss Granger?" Hermione flushed, this did seem odd.

"Please professor, Hedwig just delivered this bag to Ron. It...it is Harry's school bag, look!" Hermione pointed to the strap with Harry's name on it. Fixing her glasses, Minerva leaned in and read the name on the tag. Her eyes widened upon seeing the name. She looked at Hermione, she seemed nervous and angry, the grip on her wand was tight.

"I ran the basic spells to determine if it was really Harry's bag, and it was," Minerva waved her wand as she ran the basic spells and even more to determine if the bag was safe or not. It was safe, there was no Portkeys or Dark magic on the bag. The bag was perfectly safe. With a wave of her wand the bag dropped into her hand. Hermione gasped.

"It is perfectly safe Miss Granger, but this is disturbing, thank you for giving this to me. I shall take it to the Headmaster right away." Hermione nodded as she wished her professor a good afternoon as she went back the Great Hall.

Minerva knew this was sent from Potter, carrying the bag under her arm she went straight to the Headmaster's office, this was a turn of events. What did Potter mean by sending his bag to his friends who still thought he was dead? Was he going to reveal himself at last, which would be a relief to Minerva, she felt such pity and guilt seeing Potter's friends day after day knowing he was alive. Was he captured? Or was he close to the end of his goal, which Minerva did not fully understand though she knew in the deep recesses of her mind, the outcome was not going to be good.

The only person who could and would answer her questions was the Headmaster.

Forrest Outside of Little Cherryhill-2:10 P.M.

With a loud crack Harry landed in the forest just outside the field near the town of Little Cherryhill where Voldemort and his Death Eaters were. According to the vision he had the Death Eaters would be here for about a day and a night before they started an attack on the Muggle town. Harry landed on the ground oddly; this forest was covered with upturn roots. Harry looked around he was a deep in the forest. With a sigh Harry pulled out his wand. He had purposely Apparated away from the Death Eaters so that they did not hear him.

So Harry walked silently through the forest, turning his wand on any sound. He jumped at every little noise wondering if it was a Death Eater who would spot and kill him. But as he kept walking toward his goal he seemed calmer. He was once again in a forest, walking to his death. Yet this time he was alone and he was not afraid. His friends and loved ones were alive and well, that was all he could ask for. As he neared the edge of the forest, he could see streaks of sunlight through the trees. He could also hear voices. Harry ducked behind a tree and peered around the tree.

He could see the Death Eaters around a large bonfire. Voldemort sat on a makeshift throne with Nagini at his side, stroking her head like a cat. Bellatrix stood in the position of honor as his second in command, an honor she would soon lose. From what Harry could see, Voldemort had about thirty or so Death Eaters with him. Many had been killed or captured within the past few months, much to the Order and Harry's credit. Yet just a week ago Azkaban had been broken into and all captured Death Eaters freed. Yesterday's Daily Prophet told of the Dementors going to Voldemort's side. That's what he knew he needed to act, things were getting out of hand faster than it did before.

Yet...this scene looked familiar to him. Voldemort and his Death Eaters around a bonfire, his snake at his side, Harry behind a tree...waiting...Harry's breath seized in his chest as the memories of that night filled him. Harry shut his eyes and bit his lip to keep the memories at bay but the words he spoke that night hissed through his teeth as he gripped the sword.

"I about to die..." He turned to look at the Death Eaters. He needed to get Nagini to come to him. But how was he to do that?

"We attack the Muggles tomorrow," hissed Voldemort, a shiver went up Harry's spine.

"Take no prisoners!"

"Kill the Muggles!" he heard a few of them shout. He could see Bellatrix smiling as she moved closer to her master. Her eyes flickered in his direction, Harry ducked behind the tree but in the process his foot snapped a twig. Harry swore mentally as the Death Eaters stopped talking. Harry reached into his pocket and pulled out the Invisibility Cloak. Quickly wrapping it around himself he heard a Death Eater ask,

"What was that?" Harry slapped a hand over his mouth to silence his breathing. His other hand slowly reached for his wand.

"An Order member?" asked another Death Eater, Bellatrix scoffed.

"Probably just an animal."

"Perhaps," said Voldemort, to his Death Eaters. Harry then heard a swish of a robe then a distinct hissing that Harry could understand. It was Parseltounge. "Nagini, go see what is there, if it is a Muggle or Order member spying on us. Kill it!"

"Yesss massster," Harry heard the snake hiss in return. Well, he'd found his way to get the snake to come to him. Harry quietly pulled out the sword from its sheath as he heard the snake slither toward him. Harry watched the snake pass and go deeper into the forest, he followed her. When they were a considerable distance away from the Death Eaters Harry tore off the Cloak but kept the sword close to his side so that Nagini did not see it.

"Nagini..." Harry hissed, the snake stopped and rose up to turn and look at him. Her flaming red eyes, but like her master's glistened.

"Youuu, youuu are the boy my massster hasss been looking forrr..." Harry nodded; he tensed as the snake drew closer to him. She rose up so that she was near eye level with Harry. He took a step back,

averting his eyes slightly. The last time he had faced a snake he had been a terrified twelve year old who thought his best friend's sister was dead and was against a huge, deadly Basilisk.

"Thatsss rightttt..." Harry hissed back, smiling at the snake, "But he hasss not caught me yetttt..." The snake hissed at Harry, had she been human she would have been glaring at him. Yet she almost seemed to be human but that was because of the part of Voldemort's soul within her.

"Heeee will capture you now boyyyy...Youuuu are foolishhhh to come hereee...Tellll me boy...before you dieee...Why are you hereee?" Harry smiled as she moved closer to him, gearing herself to strike at him. Sorry, he already had one scar on his neck from his last encounter with her and he did not want another.

"To kill youuuu..." Harry hissed back and before Nagini could even strike Harry raised the sword and with one stroke cut off the snake's head. With a heavy thud the head rolled onto the ground as the body flopped to the ground, blood spurting from the stump of the head and body. Adrenaline pumped through Harry's veins as he leaned against the tree, blood dripping down the blade. He had done it, he had destroyed all of Voldemort's Horcruxes, he had done it all by himself without putting his loved ones in danger. With a sigh Harry clean the blade with his cloak and slipped it back into its sheath. Now, he was the only one left.

Harry remained slumped against the tree breathing hard for some time. He then heard Voldemort hiss,

"Nagini! Where are you? What have you found?" Harry gasped; he should have realized Voldemort would have gone looking for her by now. Quickly stuffing his Cloak into his pocket, missing the irony about last time he was about die, and with as soft,

"Wingardium Leviosa!" He floated the two halves of the snake before him, still dripping foul smelling blood. He slowly walked to the edge of the forest; Voldemort was still calling for his pet sounding angry by now.

"She's here, Tom!" shouted Harry and threw the pieces of the snake at the feet of her master. The Death Eaters all jumped to their feet,

pulling out their wands as their master screamed as the pieces of his pet-Horcrux landed at his feet splashing blood on his robes.

"Whose there?" screamed Bellatrix, "Reveal yourself," Harry stepped forward into the firelight. His hood still covered his face but he reached up and pulled it off as he said,

"Gladly. I am one you thought you killed Bellatrix," Upon seeing his face Bellatrix's eyes widened in horror and shock as other Death Eaters stood in total shock.

"Harry Potter?" spat one masked Death Eater, "Bellatrix, I thought you kill the boy," Harry watched with some amusement as Bellatrix flushed then looked at the offending Death Eater with a glare,

"I did! I watched him fall through the Veil of Death myself! This is a trick!" Harry laughed, as she placed his hand over his wand. He needed to fight off the Death Eaters if they were to attack him, only Voldemort could kill him. Bellatrix took a step back.

"I didn't die! When I fell through the Veil my parents saved me from death. The blood I share with my mother that protects me from your master saved me from death!" Bellatrix's face twisted into a look of anger. "So you did not kill me," Harry heard some Death Eaters snigger.

"SHUT UP!" she roared at them, a blush filling her pale face. Voldemort raised a hand and they all fell silent.

"So, Potter, if you have truly been alive all this time where were you?" A thin smile filled Voldemort's face; they still thought this was ruse, a trick. Harry smiled back.

"Destroying your Horcruxes..." Voldemort's face fell as whispers went up his Death Eaters. "SILENCE!" Voldemort, snapped rounding on them, they drifted away from him in a single wave. Voldemort then turned his deadly gaze to Harry.

"How...do you know about that?" Harry's smiled widened, he'd tell him the half-truth. He needed to get him so angry that he would kill him and he, Harry, would take the blow. So that meant taunting and humiliation, he was stooping to his father's level as a teenager to get Voldemort to react.

"Dumbledore and yourself..." A deadly hiss came from Voldemort as his eyes turned into slits, "You showed me the locations of your Horcruxes all but for one, I destroyed that one four years ago," He watched the form of Malfoy strink amongst the Death Eaters.

"How could you have possibly found out? I would have sensed you and stopped you!"

"Our minds are linked Tom, there are times when neither of us can stop it! Dumbledore helped me learn everything about your Horcruxes once I learned where they were, I just didn't know what they were. He's known about this for years! I used the cover of my 'death' to hunt them down as the Phoenix! I only have one more to destroy!" Harry needed to lie to Voldemort, he needed to make him think that he had one more left so that he did not create anymore. The Death Eaters froze as another ripple ran up and down. The phoenix on Harry's robes flashed making them all gasp.

"Which one? Which one have you not destroyed, boy! TELL ME!" Voldemort sounded scared, desperate. Harry thought for a moment, then came up with the one.

"That family ring of yours," Voldemort looked relieved as he smiled at Harry,

"Very clever Potter, but what happens when I kill you? Your friends will never find your body since they think you are already gone!" Harry raised his head as a lump formed in his throat, he did not want the Death Eaters to take his body. But he would not let them see his fear.

"It does not matter! If you kill me, you are mortal now, anyone can kill you!" He would not reveal the Prophecy, he would not tell him he was a Horcrux or else they may take him hostage to preserve the Horcrux within him.

"Well that's a Gryffindor statement," spat Voldemort, "I will make more Horcruxes, starting with you," Harry's heart started to pound loudly in his chest as he watched Voldemort raise his wand and open his mouth to form the curse that would end his life. Harry was not going to fight; he let go of his wand and just stood there.

"AVADA KE—" There were suddenly numerous cracks that echoed as the bright sun was starting to set, casting a golden glow over the field. In the distance one could see people Apparating onto the field, about fifty or so people.

"MASTER! THE ORDER AND THE AURORS ARE HERE!" shouted one Death Eater, the Death Eaters then shifted away from Voldemort and Harry. Wands came out and curses started to fly.

"Who is leading them?" shouted Voldemort, his wand still trained on Harry. Harry could feel the adrenaline in his veins; his heartbeat was in his ears. The Order was here, no, he could not die yet. Not here. He needed to get Voldemort to kill them without them around, it would break his friends.

"Dumbledore!" someone shouted the answer. Harry pulled his wand out and shouted,

"Expelliarmus!" Voldemort's wand flew from his fingers as he turned to look at Harry again. With a growl he pointed at Harry and shouted,

"KILL THE BOY!" Some Death Eaters turned and attacked at their master's command as others started to attack the Order. Bellatrix started to fling curse after curse at Harry. Harry had no choice now, he had fight, and he had to flee. He could not let the Order see him, capture him...if they did he'd never be let go or...killed by Sirius...

Harry spun a number of spells disarming and even hurting his attackers. He conjured his fire phoenix and spun it along the length of the forest, ensuring no Death Eater followed him on foot. He ran into the forest, pulling his hood back over his head and ensuring it stayed there with a Sticking Charm. Curses came after him helter-skelter through the forest, some coming close while others missed by a mile. Harry kept running, he needed to Apparate out of here, go back to Godric's Hollow. But...he stopped, he could still see the flashes and hear the bangs of spells in the distance.

How could he leave when his friends were still fighting? They could die and that is what Harry was trying to prevent. He was still in the costume of the Phoenix, he needed just to keep his hood up and escape before anyone could stop him. Harry then turned and began to run back to the battle; not knowing his time was up!

Just a little ways from Harry stood the senior members of Dumbledore's Army, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, the twins, Luna and Neville. Ron fell over as they hit the ground the Portkey flying out of his hands.

"Are you two sure this is the right place?" asked Neville looking around at the dense forest. Fred winked, both he and George were allowed after Harry's death to join the Order despite their mother's objections. Fred and George knew about this upcoming attack and were begged on hands and knees by their siblings and friends to take them. They were ready to fight, for Harry...

"We're sure, we double checked, twice," said George as he helped a disgruntled Ron to his feet. A loud bang then sounded as the students threw themselves to the ground. Everyone dove for their wands in their pockets, pulling them out.

"That sounds like a battle," said Luna softly, Hermione groaned.

"That's because it is one, Luna!" Slowly they go to their feet and formed a circle, backs to each other, wands out.

"We're going to get in so much trouble if the Order spots us," hissed Ginny as she surveyed the lighted forest for any sign of movement.

"Well we can always blame Fred and George," said Ron quietly but the twins heard him with a cry of,

"Hey! We resent that!"

"Besides," said Neville, "We're the ones who asked to come!" Ron shivered as he thought about his mother's reaction if they caught them.

"Stay close," whispered George, as the group slowly made their way toward the battle. This is where Harry and Fate would collide...

Out of the corner of her eye, Ginny saw movement. She turned to see a person in a black cloak running through the forest. A Death Eater surely. Ginny at first blinked to make sure it was real then gasped. But she acted quickly she turned so fast it surprised her friends and shouted,

"STUPEFY!" Harry heard the spell and recognized the voice,

"Ginny?" asked but he turned the wrong direction as the spell hit him right in between the shoulder blades. Harry felt his body seize as he fell to the ground, mentally cursing. Praying it was not Ginny but a Death Eater for once in his life. But he was dead wrong. Harry hit the ground hard as he heard his friends' voices getting closer and the pit of his stomach dropping.

Little Cherryhill Forrest-4:45 P.M. Captured By The D.A...

"Ginny, what the hell?" he heard Ron shout and along with Hermione scream.

"I hit a Death Eater! We can take him the Order!" he heard Ginny say as he felt the ground rumble with their footsteps. Ron, Hermione and Neville would not learn to Apparate until the spring, Ginny and Luna by the sound of it until next year. How in the hell did they get here?

"Are you mad?" he heard George say, "Remember we are trying to keep out of sight," That's how, Fred and George...great.

"Just leave him," said Hermione, his hood covered most of his line of vision but he could see a pair of shoes in front of him. Yes, please! Harry thought, Leave me here! The spell will wear off!

"Yeah just leave him, let's go!" said Neville, sounding a mix between determined and nervous. As he watched the shoes turn, they then stopped.

"Hey, wait a minute," he heard Fred say from above him. He watched the shoes turn to face him again and a hand pulling at the right side of his robes, turning up the Phoenix symbol. Fred gasped.

"Ginny! You shot the Phoenix!" shouted Fred, his shoes, as Harry determined jumping away from him. There was a brief silence, then he felt a foot kick his side, hard. Harry groaned as he heard Ron shout,

"Good! The bloody git deserves it after what he said about Harry!" Harry mentally began to kick himself; he should have never taunted

Sirius with remarks about his 'dead' self, now everyone is out to get him.

"We should take him to the Order then," he heard Hermione say matter-of-factly, "They want to question him." Beat me up is more likely thought Harry.

"Alright we'll take him!" said Ginny fiercely; he felt ropes bind his arms to his sides. He was lucky he put his wand back in his wand belt before he took off. Harry slumped his head forward as he felt his body rise into the air. He was floating a few inches off the ground so that the tips of his toes brushed the ground. Luckily no one looked at his face. He saw Hermione walking on one side of him; her wand was pointed at him. She was the one holding him up, on the other was Ron holding the ropes ends in his hand. Fred and George led the way with what Harry presumed since he could not see was Neville, Ginny and Luna trailing from the behind.

Harry had brief flash back to third year in the Shrieking Shack as Sirius, Remus, Ron, Hermione and himself were one way or another tied to each other because of a broken leg the on case of Ron. Tied to Wormtail and floating an unconscious Snape just as he was doing now. Oh the irony...Slowly the Stunning Spell was starting to wear off and Harry started to struggle, if he had to fight them to get away he would. He then felt his body freeze again, Neville had stunned him from behind.

"Stop struggling," he heard Ginny snap, Harry rolled his eyes. This was going to be fun. When they reached the clearing, the Death Eaters were gone with their master. A few lay dead or stunned which one Harry was not sure. But there was no one dead on the light side, which allowed Harry to breath. From what he could see the Order was around the dead body of Nagini, Dumbledore examining the creature. Harry felt his heart lighten; Dumbledore could get him out here!

"Mum! Dad!" shouted the twins, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley turned to see four of their children and friends walking their way with a hostage.

"Ginny, Ron, Fred, George, what on earth?" shouted Mrs. Weasley as she started to walk toward them, her eyes boiling with anger. Fred and George blocked her from moving toward their younger siblings.

"WHY ON EARTH ARE YOU HERE? HOW DID YOU GET HERE? DID YOU TWO BRING THEM! OF ALL THE—YOU COULD HAVE DIED OR BEEN CAPTURED! WHAT THAT WOULD HAVE DONE TO YOUR FATHER AND I! AND YOU HAD TO BRING ALONG, HERMIONE, LUNA AND NEVILLE INTO THIS MESS!"

Once her tirade had ended Fred and George looked at each other, then back at their mother then blinked. Other than their father and two eldest brothers a third Weasley was hiding amongst the Order members. Percy. Harry could see him, he looked nervous, well that was to say the least he abandoned his family and friends for an entire year! Now he was back? That was quick! Last time it took him nearly three years to reconcile with his family and admit he's been a Ministry-loving, power hungry git! It hurt Harry how they had several years of friendship that he threw away when the Ministry told him to do so.

"What the hell is he doing here!" shouted Ron beside Harry yanking on his binds, causing Harry to wince. His mother turned to look at him.

"He's part of the Order, Ron, unlike you who is still underage! Again, what are you doing here?" Ron grumbled something about a family traitor trying to find good graces with the family again. Harry couldn't help but silently agree. He began to struggle again but was stunned again by Ron.

"We want to fight!" said Neville stepping forward, his grandmother smiled at him, he was now starting to act like his parents, "We cannot sit by and watch,"

"You are too young," Harry heard Remus say, "What would your parents say if you got hurt or killed? Can't you all remember the last time you did something like this?" They all faltered as they remembered last time, someone had died. Harry had died.

"But, but we were able to capture the Phoenix in the forest," inputted Hermione. The Order then looked at Harry, he was in trouble. He then felt someone seize him and slam him into a tree, his ropes then binding him to the tree. It was Sirius.

"Got you, you little bastard!" Harry then felt something sting against his cheek as blood began to run down his face. This was going to get ugly.

"Sirius, stop!" he heard Tonks say, "It's Harry, are you mad? It's Harry, you have to stop this!" From what he could see he saw Tonks yanked back Sirius's wand arm, pulling him away from Harry.

"Tonks!" shouted Sirius, "You are the one who is mad! Since that day on the roof you've been obsessed with this idea that he—" Sirius pointed his wand at Harry, "—Is Harry, he is not! It's all a trick!" Remus moved forward to gently wrap an arm around Tonks's waist.

"We miss him as much as you do, Dora, but he is not Harry," Tonks pulled away from Remus, her dark eyes flashing. Harry felt his heart going out to her, she knew the truth, she saw the truth that day as he had guessed. Tonks turned to Dumbledore and her mentor for support, Dumbledore had confirmed that the Phoenix was Harry Potter. He had survived the Veil and was hunting down the Horcruxes.

"Mad-Eye, Dumbledore help me—" Sirius grabbed her wrist and turned her to face him. Harry was now struggling against his binds; he had to get out of here, why wasn't Dumbledore helping him? Did the old man think now was the time to reveal the truth? That was never Harry's intention, never!

"Harry is dead, Tonks," said Sirius in a deadly cold voice, his eyes dark with anger and pain. Tonks fell silent as Sirius turned to face Harry again a dark look on his face. Dumbledore then stepped forward.

"I told you this once Sirius and I will tell you this again, if you harm him you will regret it!" Sirius scoffed as he approached Harry, Harry looked at Dumbledore, his face was pleading with Harry to tell the truth. Harry then felt someone grab his hood and a bit of his hair making him cry out. Sirius's wand was at his throat as he heard Sirius say,

"Let's find out who you really are," Harry could no longer fight it, Fate had decided that Harry's identity would be revealed now, Fate would allow him to say good-bye. He just hoped he had the time and the

means to find Voldemort again and die before his friends could catch him again. Sirius then tore off Harry's hood, Harry blinked as the bright rays of the setting sun shone in his eyes. When they cleared he heard numerous gasps and screams as he heard numerous people talking at once.

Grey eyes met green eyes for the first time in months Harry was staring face to face with his godfather as himself. He watched Sirius back away from him as the color drained from his face as his eyes widened in horror and shock. From what he could see Dumbledore and Tonks were beaming, Remus was as pale as Sirius. Mrs. Weasley and Hermione had fainted while everyone just started as Sirius spoke his name,

"H-Harry?"

Chapter 24: Revealed

Note: Questions answered and Fate revealed...uh-oh...Sorry for the wait but school and all...

"H-Harry?" stuttered Sirius as he stood in shock staring at the one who called himself the Phoenix. Sirius's whole body was shaking as he flashbaked to that day on the roof when they confronted the Phoenix. Even then, with no glasses, scar and darker eyes the boy still looked like Harry. The green eyes met his eyes, as the boy was still struggling against his bonds. Those bright green eyes that he had seen in his nightmare's pleading for help, were looking back at him with terror, fear and yes, anger.

When Sirius looked into those eyes he knew it was Harry yet, he was afraid to let himself believe that Harry was in front of him, alive. It had been something he had so desperately wished for those long nights that he's wake up and find Harry standing alive at the end of his bed with a smile on his face. He'd laugh and say it was just a joke. Yet here he was standing before him...yet Sirius would still not believe it, he was afraid to.

Harry watched the emotions circle in his godfather's face as anger and disbelief filled his face, Harry knew Sirius was fighting the inevitable. Sirius walked over to Harry again yanking on his hair again, this time Harry bit back a cry. He really couldn't any way; Sirius's wand was under his throat, pushing against his Adam's apple, making him choke.

"How dare you," he growled sounding just as he did that night they had cornered Peter in the Shrieking Shack, "Do you think this is a joke? Maybe you are trying to fool the Death Eaters into thinking you are Harry Potter, but it won't fool us!"

The anger was in his eyes, livid anger. Harry had never seen such anger before, maybe once or twice in his life. One of those instants was himself, the night Snape killed Dumbledore...Harry tried to fight against Sirius's hold on him but his hold was too tight.

"Sirius! Enough!" snapped Dumbledore as he pulled out his wand pointing at the distraught man, Sirius's eyes flashed in anger. He shot Harry another deadly look then turned to the Headmaster, focusing his anger on Dumbledore.

"Do you support this? Bastard! Harry is dead and this...this...person has been toying with us! To hell with his mission, I'm going to kill him!" Sirius's wand was away from Harry's throat, it was his chance. Harry gasped,

"I'm not fooling anyone, it's me, Sirius! I can prove it to you! You—" Sirius then jabbed his wand back into Harry's throat causing him to gag. He was so close that Harry could see his terrified reflection in his godfather's eyes.

"Shut up you..." Suddenly a yellowish shield formed around Harry pushing Sirius away from Harry. It was Dumbledore who cast the shield, finally he was helping out! Sirius then rounded on the headmaster, but Dumbledore raised a hand to silence him.

"Sirius, you need to calm down, first and foremost. Second, this is Harry, how can you not see it?" It was not now Remus's turn to speak, his amber-brown eyes flashing with anger.

"We saw him fall through the Veil! No one can survive that!" Dumbledore's eyes twinkled, as a thin smile came across Dumbledore's face.

"Harry did survive, he's right in front of you," Ron then came forward, his face red with anger.

"How? HOW? He's not Harry," Harry flinched when Ron pointed at him, his blue eyes blazing with anger. Dumbledore then looked to Snape, what was he going to do? Snape reached into the pocket of his robes and pulled out a small glass vial. A vial that Harry recognized as Veritaserum, oh boy...Snape then handed the vial to Dumbledore. Harry swallowed down the lump in his throat. But if this was the only way...he'd take it.

"Veritaserum?" asked Moody, Dumbledore gave Moody a brief nod. The Order's eyes turned to look at Harry again. Some were murmuring to themselves, shaking their heads. Surely this boy was a liar, why could he just not be man to admit it?

"What is that going to prove?" asked Ginny, her eyes blazing with anger.

"That Harry is truly Harry," said Dumbledore simply. Harry's friends then started to shout at the Headmaster but were silenced by Mrs. Weasley. She shot them all a dark look as she fixed her eyes then upon Harry. At times it was hard to read the Weasley matron and today was one of those days in Harry's opinion.

"How would, if he is truly is not Harry, how did he get Harry's hair for the Polyjuice Potion?" People then blinked and looked at one another, it was a fair question. Dumbledore nodded as whispers went up and down the Order. Hermione then started to whisper to herself the facts as she looked surprised at her own answer. Ron only rolled his eyes. The twins looked at each then at Ginny saying it was a fair question. Neville and Luna, just stood there.

Dumbledore approached Harry with his wand out, Harry looked at him, hopefully he would untie him and Harry could make a run for it. "Don't untie him!" snapped Bill quietly next to Fleur who watched Harry with a certain nervousness, "We need to ascertain his identity before we can free him," Harry watched with hope dwelling as Dumbledore did not untie him. Harry's his stomach dropped, the time had come, he would have to reveal himself fully. There was no other way.

"Harry?" asked Dumbledore, Harry looked up into the sad blue eyes, he understood. Dumbledore did not want to meet Harry like this again as much as Harry did. They had their good-byes and this was just more painful and drawn out.

"He's not Harry!" shouted several people at the same time, but Harry's sole focus now was Dumbledore and the vial he carried.

"Will you willing take the Veritaserum ?" Harry's eyes then scanned the people around him, watching with baited breath. The anger and betrayal in their eyes would make anyone want to submit, but what made it hurt even worse was these people were his loved ones. With a sigh, Harry nodded his consent.

Snape raised an eyebrow. After everything Potter did to make sure his identity was kept a secret, he finally relented, why? The Dark Lord by now surely knew the truth. Was the boy just caught between a rock and a hard place? Or did the boy want proper good-byes before he faced the Dark Lord and Death? Who knew? Only Potter did.

"Open your mouth, please, Harry," asked Dumbledore as he pulled the cork off of the vial. Harry opened his mouth and shut his eyes. He felt three drops being poured onto his tongue. It was not even much to swallow. But swallow it he did. The effect was instant. He felt his entire body and brain go numb. It was a feeling...no a sense...well...the best way he could describe it was what Muggles said the effects of hypnosis are. That one understands what they are doing or saying but really doesn't care because they are compelled to answer the questions given to them truthfully and honestly.

Through his foggy, numb eyes Harry watched as Dumbledore positioned himself so that he was eye-to-eye with Harry.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked softly, a chill ran down Harry's spine as he numbly pulled up the memory from the night of the Third Task as Dumbledore interrogated Barty Crouch Jr. before Harry. He had asked the Death Eater the same question.

"Yes, you are Albus Dumbledore," Dumbledore smiled at Harry as he nodded.

"Very good, now, what is your name?"

"Harry James Potter..." Harry heard several gasps and exclaiming and swearing at his answer. Yet Harry tilted his head slightly to watch his godfather and his friends. Their faces were still determined, but Luna, Neville and Hermione had hope in their eyes. The harder the look in their eyes, the more evidence they would need. Dumbledore knew that.

"Date of birth?"

"31st July 1980?"

"Parents' names?"

"James Potter and Lily Potter..."

"The date and place they died?"

"Dumbledore," intoned Mr. Weasley, hesitantly, "Everyone knows these questions and answers, what about things only Harry would

know?" Dumbledore then smiled as Harry numbly saw the glint in his eyes. That's what he wanted, from them, personal things that only Harry would know.

"Of course, Arthur, well then..." For a moment, Dumbledore thought about his question, then turned to Harry,

"On one cold, December night, you and I, Harry, had a proper chat for the first time. If I recall, you saw something in a mirror, what did you see?"

"My family...it was the Mirror of Erised..." Dumbledore nodded, out of the corner of his eyes, he watched Ron Weasley's eyes widen, he knew what Harry had seen in the Mirror.

"What did I see?" A faint smile appeared on Harry's face,

"You saw a pair of socks sir..." Dumbledore nodded. He then turned to the Order and the D.A., "He has accurately described the event as I remember it, this is Harry Potter...But if you do not want to take my word, ask him questions you know only Harry would know," With that Dumbledore stepped aside as silence came from the Order. The sun had fully set by now.

Slowly, Hermione walked forward, she was gripping her wand tightly in nervousness. She was chewing her lips in fear as she met Harry's eyes.

"What...what happened in our second year that I had to spend several weeks in the Hospital Wing for and why did we do it?"

"You turned half-way into a cat when you thought you added some hair of a Slytherin girl to the Polyjuice Potion when we were trying to catch Draco Malfoy as the Heir of Slytherin." Snape stood off to the side looking livid; Granger had stolen his potion ingredients for a Polyjuice Potion? He'd deal with her later. A smile then appeared on Hermione's face, as did tears.

"Harry?" Harry gave her a small nod. One by one people came forward with questions such as from Fleur,

"What did you do for me, during the Second Task? Something I will always be in your debt, 'Arry,"

"I saved your sister, Gabrielle," Fleur nodded as she wrapped her arms around her fiancé's waist as she said proudly,

"He is, 'Arry!" The twins then pushed their way to the front, identical looks of curiosity and apprehension on their faces.

"What did you give to us on the train at the end of your fourth year? And what were we do with it?"

"To build your joke shop and to buy Ron a new pair of dress robes and say they were from you," Ron's surprised face went red as the twins then looked back at their brother.

"He's Harry!" said the twins together. Ron groaned and rolled his eyes as he pushed past the twins and then strode up and looked Harry in the eye.

"What did I say I saw in the Mirror? And...and what chess piece was I when we went after the Sorcerer's Stone?" Harry blinked= those were easy.

"You saw yourself better than your brothers...Head Boy, Quidditch Captain, winner of the House Cup and you were a Knight," Ron's angry look fell as he paled as he started at his best friend. Ginny gently pushed aside her brother, as she looked Harry in the face. What was she thinking? Was she thinking back to that kiss, now that she knew the truth? Her eyes held no anger now, they were soft.

"What did you tell me, after...after Tom was destroyed in the Chamber of Secrets?" Harry felt the tenseness in his muscles relax as Ginny touched his face softly.

"That it was going to be alright that the nightmare as over, it was just a dream," A bright smile appeared on her face as she kissed Harry's cheek to Ron's amazement as he let out a noise. Luna and Neville along with Tonks put forward questions, which he had answered correctly. Remus then stepped forward, lighting his wand as the sky darkened.

"What is your Patronus?" asked Remus softly, the anger was gone but fear was still there; fear that they may all be wrong.

"A stag, named Prongs after my dad," Snape snorted, Remus shot him a look. With trembling look Remus knelt in front of Harry as he surveyed his face. How could he have been so blind? Blind with anger, rage and guilt not to see the truth. This was James's son...Sirius then knelt beside Remus to look up into Harry's face. Upon seeing his godfather, some emotions ranged in Harry's dull eyes.

"What did I tell you over Christmas, when Snape told you he was going to teach you Occulmency?"

"That if he did something to be, he'd have to answer to you..." There was a slicing sound as Sirius cut Harry's binds. Harry fell forward into Sirius's arms. The drugs still clouded Harry's senses, but he could hear and feel Sirius sobbing grateful sobs into his shoulder.

"Thank God...Thank God...you're alive...How...How?" choked Sirius, he cupped Harry's face so that he could see Harry's face. Sirius ran a finger over the cut he created on Harry's face, "God, I hurt you,"

"It's okay," said Harry dully as Sirius pulled him back into his embrace. This time Harry hugged Sirius back with force. Harry forced down a sob as he clung to his godfather. He could not cry, he just could not. He'd soon be dead; Fate gave him a chance to say good-bye...

"How did you survive?" asked Mrs. Weasley as she reached out to hug Harry, Harry stood up as he hugged her. But the drug in his system still made him talk, to tell the truth.

"My parents saved me. The blood protection of my mother saved me. As long as I held her hand, I stayed alive within the Veil," Everyone went quiet as Sirius and Remus looked at each other and Harry. Mrs. Weasley then inspected Harry, holding him at arms length.

"Where have you been? Why didn't you contact us?" The truth serum kicked in and Harry knew he had to get away before all of his secrets came tumbling out.

"Godric's Hollow," Sirius stood up slowly, how horrible that must have been. Spending months in the house were Harry lost his family.

"Harry..." Harry turned to look at his godfather as Mrs. Weasley stood there in shock, her hands over her mouth.

"It was safe, I had to stay hidden. I didn't contact anyone but Dumbledore to keep the cover of death to hunt the Horcruxes," All eyes turned to Dumbledore, Sirius looked furious, angrier than anyone there. He looked ready to attack the Headmaster had Harry not stood in front of Dumbledore, shielding him.

"He's the only one I trusted at the time to keep my secret safe," Sirius's grey eyes burned with anger.

"You let Dumbledore know you were alive, yet you let all of us suffer? Suffer thinking you were dead? How dare..."

"Harry that was cruel!" cried Hermione.

"How could you do that?" People were yelling at him, angry, betrayed, they had to understand. He was saving them...saving them all from terrible fates. To defeat Voldemort...The anger and hurt built inside his chest as he finally screamed,

"You don't understand! I hid under the cover of death in order to destroy the Horcruxes without Voldemort and his Death Eaters noticing! I did this to save all of you! I COULDN'T WATCH YOU DIE AGAIN!" Sirius blinked, Ron and Hermione looked at each other then at their friend.

"What do you mean, 'save us' Harry?" After his outburst Harry clamped his hands over his mouth he shook his head. He would say no more. Dumbledore would explain everything once he was dead. It would take too much time to tell his full story, that he was from the past...

"Harry, what the hell?" shouted Ron; there was so much pain. He had explain just a little bit, it was fully dark by now and most of the Order had their wands out the lights on their tips casting dim lights over them all, like a candle light ceremony...

"You all could have died had I told you the truth. Voldemort and his Death Eaters could have captured you and tortured you for my whereabouts. Besides, I knew where the Horcruxes were and how to kill them! Besides I have one more left to kill!"

There was a brief silence before Sirius looked at Harry with an odd look on his face. He looked back at the others as he then looked at Harry again in shock.

"Harry," said Mr. Weasley, "Voldemort could have captured us and killed us, anyway. With or without us knowing that you are alive..." Harry nodded, that was a true fact...Sirius turned to look at Harry, full in the face.

"I thought you had killed all of them," Harry shook his head as he slowly began to back away from his loved ones he had to get away.

"There is one more left," he whispered. The Order members started to whisper looking at each other with wonder and fear. Sirius stepped forward reaching out to touch Harry's shoulder. Harry did not allow Sirius to touch him.

"Hey, now, wait a minute,"

"Let us help you," Hermione came forward placing a hand on Harry's shoulder, Harry sighed. He could not let them follow him.

"It's okay, I'll go destroy it then come back," Harry tried not to let his emotions creep into his voice. He had to leave, he had to leave now. Harry's eyes flickered to Dumbledore his blue eyes were sad and distant. He knew Harry needed to get away. To face his destiny.

"Well where is it?" asked Ron with a shrug, Harry looked up at his best friend. He was serious, they all were. He should have known, they had been insistent to help him before, why would they not this time? With a sigh Harry ran his fingers through his hair, shaking his head.

"Thank you, but it would be faster if I did it myself,"

"No," said Sirius, coming forward, placing a hand on Harry's shoulder, "We will help you...I've lost you once, I will not lose you again." Harry looked at the ground staring at his feet. He could not let him come...

"No," said Harry, pulling away from his godfather, "I have to do, it's my destiny...my duty..."

"Why is it your responsibility?" asked Remus softly. Harry turned away from Remus groaning, why couldn't they just let him go!

"I HAVE TO KILL IT! ME! HARRY!" shouted Harry, his guilt and frustration, starting to come through. Sirius groaned, Harry was so stubborn. If anything he had inherited that trait from James. Why was it so hard for Harry to let go of this mission? Why couldn't he let his friends help him?

"Why can't someone else kill it Harry? Huh? Is killing a Horcrux that hard?" Harry sighed, he needed them to understand, and he had no choice. He had to tell them the truth. He looked Sirius dead in the eye as he walked up to his godfather. He looked him in the eye, grey to green.

"Then...kill it..."

Harry took the dagger from his belt and put it into Sirius's hand. Sirius gave him an odd look. Harry curled Sirius's finger around the hilt with his own hands. Then Harry jabbed the dagger at his heart, his hands still wrapped around Sirius's hand holding the dagger. The point of the dagger was at Harry's heart.

"Harry...w-what?" Harry's eyes were dark as he jabbed the dagger tip into his robes and shirt.

"Then kill it!" he shouted, repeating himself, his voice choked with pain. Sirius stared at him with wide eyes as he pulled the dagger away from Harry's heart and dropped it.

"W-What...?"

"I am the seventh Horcrux..." said Harry, he reached into his pocket and pulled out his wand. He then pointed it at his friends, something he'd thought he'd never do. He slowly started to back away from them.

"I must let Voldemort kill me, there is no other way. That's why I tried to stay away from you so that you would not have to suffer my death a second time."

"No wait there has to be another way!"

"Yeah we just...just!"

"We can nullify the Horcrux inside of you...Professor, please..."

"If Dumbledore had found any other solution than this, we would have executed it by now, Hermione..."

"Harry don't please..."

"I must return to the place where it all began again...Please don't follow me...I love you all...please..." Harry then turned and ran until he was out their reach both physically and the reach of their wands. With tears streaming down his face he Apparated away with a crack. Before he vanished Harry heard numerous crying out for him to stop or wait,

"HARRY, NO!"

With that he was gone.

Note: Next, Harry's friends race against time to stop him but where is 'The place where it all began again?'

Chapter 25: Race Against Time

Note: Sorry, I've been busy with school and work so thank you for your patience.

Sirius watched as his godson disappeared the crack of Apparation, rung in his ears. Sirius could still feel the knife in his hands and Harry's tight fingers around his own. He could have sworn that the blade had Harry's blood on it. Sirius was shaking badly, he had to lean against the tree that he had tied Harry to for support. His breath was coming in ragged and harsh, his head spun so sickly it was hard to concentrate on the facts.

Harry was alive...and he was about to die...he was a Horcrux, he was about to die...

"He's going to die...he's going to die," Sirius whispered under his breath as tears spilled out. How could he have been so blind? So blind that Harry was Harry and now...

"What just happened?" asked Ron quietly, as looked to his parents for answers. Sirius felt hands force him to stand up, it was Remus. The Order stood in absolute silence as all eyes turned to Dumbledore for answers.

"Professor, please," begged Hermione, "We have to stop him!" Many people nodded their heads and agreed with the young girl. Sirius looked up as he blinked the tears out of his eyes. Dumbledore had a sad look that went to his eyes. He knew, the old man had known everything! That Harry was alive! That Harry was fighting a battle they all could have helped in! And the most damning of all, he knew Harry was a Horcrux and that Harry was going to have to die in order to bring down Voldemort.

Sirius started to move toward Dumbledore with a film of red over his eyes, he reached for his wand. Numerous stunning spells came over him, but did not hit. Sirius stopped nearly nose to nose with the headmaster. He had grabbed handfuls of Dumbledore's dark navy robes, the rage pumping through his veins. Sirius felt like punching, shaking Dumbledore until he was black, blue and bloody. How dare he? How dare he interfere where Harry is considered, but then again Dumbledore had always interfered where Harry was concerned?

It was he who had sent Hagrid to Lily and James's house with orders to take Harry to his Muggle aunt and uncle's house. He had denied Sirius his rights as Harry's godfather and Lily and James's Will to have Sirius become Harry's primary guardian if something had happened to them. One of the greatest what ifs in Sirius's head for years was: what if Dumbledore allowed him to take Harry that October night. Sirius would have never gone after Peter, the Ministry would have captured him. Harry would have grown up with him, with all the love and attention that the poor boy deserved! He would have raised Harry the way Lily and James would have raised him had they lived. Even when Sirius had a house Dumbledore told him Harry would be safer at his aunt and uncle's house because of the blood protection on the house. Yes, where Harry was concerned Dumbledore had always interfered!

"Why? Why? Why is this happening? Why did you keep this a secret?" screamed Sirius, he could barely feel the hands, the numerous hands grabbing him, keeping him from attacking the headmaster. Dumbledore sighed, lowering his head. The hands had pried Sirius's hands from Dumbledore's robes freeing the man, making Sirius struggle against them.

"It is a fair question Dumbledore," said Mrs. Weasley who had her hands on Ginny and Ron's shoulders. Dumbledore turned around as he clasped his hands behind his back. Everything Harry had explained to him, they needed to know the truth. About Harry and his trip through time and space to save those he loved. They needed to know what he knew in order to understand. Dumbledore then turned to face Sirius again. Remus, Bill and Charlie had a tight grip on him.

"Harry is not whom he seems he is..." Sirius opened his mouth, to argue against the headmaster but Dumbledore raised his hand.

"Please let me explain...everything. Harry is not whom he says he is. He comes from a time and place where he has lived two more years. He's attended his sixth year at Hogwarts and spent his seventh year hunting the Horcruxes with Mr. Weasley and Miss. Granger," Hermione opened her mouth to ask him a question but Ron grabbed her hand and squeezed her hand with a quiet,

"Shhh..." Hermione closed her mouth.

"A world where he has been taught by myself to hunt for the Horcruxes, where he has seen so much death that it has ripped him apart, where he's had to face many challenges after his fifth year with mounting stress and with little guidance," Everyone stared at Dumbledore as if he had spoken a foreign language. Harry was from another time? Then where was their Harry?

"If he is from another time..." said Neville, "Then where is the Harry of this time?" Dumbledore turned to look at Harry's paling friends.

"He is one and the same. The information and knowledge of this future Harry has found its way through time and space, to the body of this Harry...To Harry he has lived and experienced everything and thus has a desire to protect all of us. To Harry if he sees any of us die he will be reliving his failure to protect us. That is also why he knew what and where the Horcruxes were,"

"What has he experienced?" asked Tonks softly, Dumbledore turned to look at the pink-haired witch. Dumbledore sighed, it would be easier to show them but without his Pensieve he could not, he'd have to explain.

"Sirius, do you remember the night at the Department of Mysteries?" Sirius tensely nodded, how could he forget? That day was burned into his memory. The fight to get to the children, Harry safe and sound in his arms. The fight side by side with him, Bellatrix, then being pushed out of the way, away from the Veil and Harry standing in his place facing his cousin triumph on his face. Harry had fought like a mad. Then the Veil...Sirius blinked back tears.

"Do you remember what he did?" Sirius, nodded again.

"He fought like hell, he pushed me out of the way...he went into the Veil..." Dumbledore nodded, he looked Sirius straight in the eye.

"He fought like hell because you died by falling through the Veil...on that very night in Harry's original time..." Sirius stood in shock, he had died in this...alternate world...No wonder he had fought like an animal to reach him...The triumph on his face now made sense Sirius, he was proud that he had prevented Sirius's death. Harry had taken Sirius's place in the Veil...Sirius turned away to look back at the spot where Harry had disappeared...it made sense...it made sense...

"In this different time, I taught about the Horcruxes and where they were during Harry's sixth year. I was dying from a curse from wearing the Ring Horcrux that slowly killed me. The only Horcruxes Harry did not know about at the time of my death was that he was the seventh Horcrux. In order to keep Severus's cover as a Death Eater I had him kill me, in front of Harry after we located a fake Horcrux," There were hisses of breath and gasps. Eyes flickered between Snape and Dumbledore, none of them could imagine losing their leader like that. Feeling betrayed by someone they trusted.

"I assure you, Severus is on our side, it by my order that Severus killed me," Skeptics shot each other odd looks. Hermione put her hand up into the air much like as if she was at class. Snape snorted, always to the know-it-all.

"How did you find all of this out, Professor?" Dumbledore gave a small smile to the bushy haired girl, always asking questions.

"Harry showed me everything, he showed me his memories," Hermione nodded, understanding.

"After hunting down most of the Horcruxes, Harry and his friends went to Hogwarts to find the final Horcruxes. The last battle was at Hogwarts; many were killed according to his memories. Including Remus, Tonks, Severus and...Fred Weasley..." Mrs. Weasley gasped and instantly pulled Fred close to her as if he would die that very second. "Severus gave Harry his memories as he was dying and from there Harry discovered the truth. From there Harry went to face Voldemort, then when the Killing Curse hit him and he ended up here,"

A silence fell over the Order and the D.A. at the conclusion. It seemed like a dream to most but yet the information slowly processed and it made sense. Harry wanted to do this alone so that no one got hurt. He had seen many of his friends hurt and dying.

"So this whole thing was because of his 'experiences'?" asked Luna, softly, "That is why he stayed 'dead' to us, that's why he became the Phoenix, so that he could destroy the Horcruxes without any of us getting hurt or killed," Dumbledore nodded in agreement. That is

why Harry kept all of this under wraps so that his loved ones would not get hurt.

"He was protecting us..." said Remus, Bill and Charlie had finally let Sirius go. Sirius gave a small smile, he could understand now, after all the hardships Dumbledore explained he could understand why his godson had did this. If he were in Harry's shoes, he'd do the same thing too.

"Stubborn kid..." murmured Sirius. Sirius leaned against the tree.

"We have to stop him," said Ginny, speaking up, "We have to stop Harry," Snape looked toward the youngest Weasley, she was worried for her friend, she wanted him safe. He had wanted that too once upon a time, but Potter knew what needed to be done.

"You cannot stop him Weasley," said Snape, coolly, "You heard Potter, he cannot turn back, he knows what he must do," Ginny glared at Snape, she tried to move toward him but her mother stopped her.

"We have to try!"

"She's right," said Sirius, stepped forward, "We have to try and stop him. There has to be some other way," Snape turned to face Black, he could see the determination and fear on his face.

"He cannot be stopped, Black! If there was a way to remove the Horcrux from Potter, Dumbledore would have done so. The boy must die!" Sirius charged Snape, grabbing him by his collar and flinging him into a tree. Black's eyes were blazing with anger.

"Don't tell me what to do! He's my godson, my responsibility! I WILL NOT FAIL LILY AND JAMES AGAIN! HE WILL BE SAFE!" Snape flinched at Lily's name. His own promise to protect her son flashed through his mind. Remus was yelling at Sirius as pulled him away from Snape, turning him to face him.

"I promised too, Sirius. We both did the night Voldemort returned to protect Harry for Lily and James...We both promised, just stop..." Sirius leaned against Remus's shoulder as he bit back tears. He was scared...would this be the end? Would Voldemort win with Harry dead? What would Lily and James do or say when they saw

that Harry joined them wherever they were. Would they hate them? Would Harry?

Snape blinked, Lupin and Black had made similar promises to protect the boy as he had promised Lily, but they had promised both Lily and Potter...They had a similar goal...

"Where is he?" asked Remus, turning on Dumbledore. His amber-brown eyes flashing. Dumbledore shook his head.

"The riddle Harry gave us, could mean many different places," People stared at him; surely he knew where Harry was going? But the sad look on Dumbledore's face told all that he did not know where the young wizard had gone. All hope at that moment had seemed lost.

"Could it mean Godric's Hollow, that is where everything began," said Remus, rubbing his chin. Dumbledore shook his head, no, no, Harry had mentioned 'again', nothing else had happened there between Voldemort and Harry other than that first altercation.

"The Department?" asked Ron, Dumbledore shook his head again, Voldemort and his Death Eaters would not enter the Ministry not while everyone was on high alert.

"The place where it all began" whispered Ginny, "Could-could it be where Voldemort came back to his body? The Place where the Second Wizarding War began?" All eyes turned to look at the redheaded girl, Hermione gasped, it all made sense.

"Of course..." said Snape, "That graveyard is where the Dark Lord feels safe and powerful," Wands started to come out of pocket and robes.

"We have to stop him! Now!" shouted Sirius, Dumbledore sighed there was no fighting it.

"Harry will fight you, Sirius, he knows he has to sacrifice himself," Sirius turned to face the headmaster, his eyes blazing.

"We will get him back, there has to be some other way to get that Horcrux out of him," Dumbledore sadly, there was no other way, if

there was any other way to save Harry, Dumbledore would do it in a heart beat.

"We're coming too!" shouted Ron, pulling out his wand, a determined look on his face. His friends, all nodded, enthusiastically agreeing with Ron. Mrs. Weasley, instantly grabbed her children and their friends, shoos them away from the Order.

"You will not!" she shouted, wagging her finger at them, "You are coming with me back to Hogwarts! Including you two," she said pointing at the twins. Shouts and groans came from the students. They argued with the Weasley matron until Moody stepped in and agreed with Mrs. Weasley. The children were to return with Mrs. Weasley. Moody created a Portkey out of a twig with the count of three the children and Mrs. Weasley disappeared in a flash of blue light.

"To Little Hangleton Graveyard!" said Dumbledore, with that numerous loud pops echoed around the night. Sirius prayed that they were not too late to save Harry. He did not want to fail Lily and James again, he did not want to fail Harry and he did not want to fail himself again...

End Note: I promise the next few chapters will be longer!

Chapter 26: Avada Kedavra

Note: Time to die. Sorry the last chapter was a little corny but you have to think that if they had found out what Harry's fate was going to be, either way, they would try to stop him. Sorry I've been busy and my muse has vanished for a bit, but I'm back!

Harry knew where to go; during his conversation with his loved one he had seen a flash inside his mind of where Voldemort was...where he was to die. Where the Second Wizarding War started, the graveyard...This time he'd die in a graveyard, not a forest. He was starting to like the forest setting more and more.

The sickening whirling, spinning feeling of Apparition cleared his head from the dazed and painful looks in the eyes of his loved ones. It ripped his heart into pieces to see them like that. That is why he thought that it would have been better to stay away from them. Their cries were still in his ears. Yet he felt himself smile, in the end he had done what he wanted, no, needed to do. He saved them all from their fates and now...now he could go to his death happily. He just prayed Voldemort did not create any new Horcruxes while he was gone...With a crack he landed in the graveyard, tears spilled over his cheeks.

After blinking the tears out of his eyes, Harry rose to his feet quickly. Yet he did not touch his wand, he would not need it. Harry breathed in and out calmly to get a grip on his nerves. Out in the clearing he could see Voldemort and his Death Eaters, this was it, all he had to do was walk out there and...Harry swallowed after months and months of knowing what was going to happen, it still did not sink in well. As Harry inched toward the Death Eaters, he heard numerous cries and spells shooting his way. A Stunning spell nearly hit him in the chest, but he was able to duck out of the way.

"What was that?" he heard one Death Eater shout. Bellatrix's eyes were sharp as she scanned the horizon for any sign of their enemies.

"The Order? They followed us here," Wands turned in different directions; Harry knew they were looking for the Order. But he was there, not his loved ones. Voldemort raised his hand from where he sat on an old looking chair that seemed like a throne. Bellatrix turned to look at her master.

"My lord?" she asked curiously, bowing to him. Harry watched as Voldemort's red eyes scanned the grounds of the graveyard, he knew, he knew Harry was here.

"The boy...Potter is here," Gasps and whispers ran up and down the Death Eaters they seemed confused, why was the boy here? Bellatrix, smiled, the boy had a death wish. Voldemort fingered his wand, his real wand. Not the Elder wand, but the wand that was a brother to Harry's. Voldemort smiled,

"I know you're here, Potter! Come out, Potter! Come out, now!" Harry breathed in a deep breath as he stepped out from behind a large tombstone. He held out his hands to show he was not going to fight. His head held high, just like that night, when he faced Voldemort before...

"Here I am!" shouted Harry, Voldemort and his Death Eaters turned to face him and their wands were trained on him. This was it...Voldemort smiled at Harry, Harry shivered.

"There is he is!" he heard a Death Eater shout, with a flick of his wand, Voldemort stunned Harry. Harry shut his eyes as he felt the red light hit him in the center of his chest as he fell to the ground.

"I knew he would come!" he heard Voldemort hissed, "He will plead for the lives of his friends and his beloved Order," Harry felt hands grab him under his arms, he felt himself being dragged. His feet dragging behind him, his head slumping, he could see his feet behind him and the strong smell of grass. Then the dragging stopped as they dropped Harry onto his knees.

Harry felt course hands grabbing his wrists and forcing them together as someone bound his hands. Rough hands kept him on his knees since he was stunned and had no control over his own body. Why they had tied him up seemed silly to Harry since he was stunned, yet they were not taking any chances. Harry looked at the ground this was it...

He was going to die, here and now, he was going to die...

How wrong he was...

Someone grabbed Harry's hair and forced his head to look upward. He met dark eyes, the eyes of Bellatrix. Harry felt his heart hammer in his chest, he felt like spitting in her face, but he had to be strong. Though he hated her with his entire being for taking Sirius away from him the first time, he did not want her to kill him. She was grinning a wild smile at him; he could feel her wand under his chin. Harry glared at her.

"What shall we do with him my lord?" she asked, her voice dripping with venom. Bellatrix looked toward Voldemort, Harry's eyes met the red eyes of his enemy. A smirk appeared on Voldemort's face as his Death Eaters started to laugh, this was not good.

Not good at all.

"You're quite brave to come on your own, Potter. Did you think boy, I was just going to kill you, painlessly? Oh no...I'm going to make you feel every ounce of pain I have felt for the past sixteen years..." Now Harry was starting to wish for the circumstances to be similar to the one that night. Shoot him and he was dead, not torture him. That was looking pretty good right now.

"Don't even think you can escape boy or that your beloved Order can save you. I will put up wards to keep them away from us and from you," Harry watched as Voldemort raised his wand and with complicated movements, set up wards. Harry could see a semi-transparent bubble form before vanishing. Harry breathed a sigh of relief if the Order did follow him and try to save him, they could not. No one could Apparate in front of him and take the hit, for that he was thankful.

Other than that this was going to be painful.

The Death Eaters started to laugh as someone stunned him again and kicked him to the ground. Before Harry could move, he heard Voldemort scream the curse. Harry was then engulfed in pain. It burned him from the inside out it was hard to describe that amount of pain that rushed through his body.

The Death Eaters jeered at him as they took turns one by one torturing him, yet Harry did not scream. He did not beg, he would not let them get sick pleasure by hearing his pain. It was probably already evident on his face and the way his body jerked side to side.

"Enough," said Voldemort coldly, yet Harry could hear the glee in his voice. Harry's body continued to twist with pain as he slowly regained control of his body. His breath came in heavy heaves as felt the torture had lasted for a few hours when it had only lasted for five minutes.

"Take a rest, Potter..." hissed Voldemort, Harry began to struggle against his bonds, why couldn't they just kill him? Harry could feel the skin at his wrists chafe and bleed. Only seconds passed before Voldemort turned his wand on Harry again.

The pain was unbearable yet Harry held his tongue again and again. After several more minutes of pain, the curse was lifted.

"Yes, Potter, the pain you feel is my pain, my agony, I will have you begging for death. Bellatrix, untie him and get him on his feet. We are going to finish that duel we started two years ago in this place," Harry numbly felt his bonds being cut as hands forced him to feet. Yet Harry did not grab his wand, he was here willing to die; he was not going to fight him.

"What's the matter, Potter, lose the will to fight now you know you are going to die?" spat a masked Death Eater to Harry's left. Harry bit his lip until it bruised.

"He's probably going to beg for the lives of his friends and the Order! For Muggles and Mudbloods," Harry felt his blood boil under his skin. He had to form fists to keep himself from reaching for his wand. Harry looked at Voldemort, the red eyes seemed weary. Yet a smile then formed on the Dark Lord's face, he thought Harry was giving up.

"I will not fight you Tom, it's over," said Harry coolly, he spread out his hands and looked his enemy in the eye. Anger flickered over Voldemort's eyes when Harry called him by his real name. With a flick of his wand Voldemort cut Harry's face. Harry felt the warm blood trickle down his face; it was a deep cut no doubt.

"Do not use that name," he spat, Harry smiled he hit a nerve. Maybe if he kept pressing that nerve then maybe, just maybe Voldemort would kill him out of rage and it would all be over. Though on the outside Harry looked calm, on the inside he was terrified. He remembered Remus's comment from that night in the forest. He'd want it over quickly, he was sure of that statement now.

"But it is your name," said Harry quietly enough for only Voldemort to hear. Voldemort's eyes narrowed as he sent another curse at Harry, Harry gasped as he felt a deep pain at his chest. Blood started to appear on his shirt, the cut wasn't deep but enough to stain his shirt red. The Death Eaters were laughing at Harry's pain. Harry just wanted to scream at Voldemort to just kill him and get it over with. Every time he raised his wand, Harry thought it was the end.

"Fight, Potter," growled Voldemort with a hint of a smile on his face. Harry looked at his enemy straight in the eye and said,

"No," Voldemort watched Harry, but then a smile grew across his swallow face as he began to laugh a mad laugh.

"You see my followers, Potter knows the end is nigh! He knows he cannot fight a powerful wizard as I without Dumbledore or his friends," Harry rolled his eyes, he wished. But with this selfless act; it would be the end of him as well. He just did not know it.

Voldemort continued to boast his upcoming defeat of Harry as he circled the boy. Yet Harry did not hear him, he closed his eyes and stood there. He shut all noise out of his ears. He focused on his loves ones, making his mental shields even stronger. Their faces, voices, of events, places...It all came in like a river, a river that would protect him from Voldemort's cruel words. Voldemort then stopped and turned to face Harry, the boy had his eyes closed; he knew it was the end.

"Now, Harry Potter...the Boy Who Lived...prepare to die," Voldemort raised his wand, Harry could hear the swish of Voldemort raising his wand, this was it.

"My lord!" cried Bellatrix, her grip was tight on her wand, "The Order is here! To save the boy!" Harry's eyes snapped open in surprise. Voldemort's wand was above his head ready to strike, his head turned to the left. Harry's eyes followed the Dark Lord's gaze; running down the hill from the graveyard was the Order

Harry heard his name screamed by numerous people. It was just as Bellatrix had warned; the Order was here, to save him. No, this could not happen, why couldn't Dumbledore tell them it had to be

this way? Why? They could die! All of them, that is what he had been fighting against for all these months and the Headmaster knew it! Yet he had told them under Vertiserum what he had planned to...what his darkest secret was...the reason he hid behind death.

But a small smile appeared on his face, they could not reach him even if they fought until they sweat blood. It was impossible, with the wards up to keep the Order out; Harry would have to die regardless of their wishes. He wished they could understand, why he was doing, that it needed to be done; yet he did not blame them for trying to save him. Isn't that what he did for them?

"My lord, quickly, kill the boy!" shouted Bellatrix, as she pointed her wand at her enemy, "Before they can save him," This was it, the time was finally here. Harry out of the corner of his eye saw Voldemort raised his wand. He did not want to see him anymore, so he looked toward his friends.

He could see panic in their faces, sheer panic. They were desperate to reach him, to find another way to remove the Horcrux from his body. But there was no other way, Voldemort had to kill Harry and Harry had to be willing to die. Sirius was ahead of group yelling for Harry to run, move, get out of the way. Harry smile widened, Sirius always fought tooth and nail for him. But he had to let him go...He gave them a wide smile as he shook his head at them to tell them, 'You cannot save me, it is done' as he heard Voldemort scream the words that sealed his fate,

"AVADA KEDAVRA!" Harry could see the Order moving as fast as they could but with the wards around Harry and the Death Eaters no one could stop Voldemort with a curse, no one could Apparate in front of Harry and take the blow. Fear and horror was alight in their faces as they tried to stop Voldemort...

But it was too late.

Harry turned to face once again for what seemed the hundredth time in his short life, the Killing Curse. The green ball of light zoomed straight at him, he closed his eyes, stretched out his hands to show he was not going to fight...and smiled...

"HAAAARRRRYYYYY!"

"NO!"

"STOP IT!"

"GET OUT OF THERE!"

"MOVE!"

"HARRY, NO!"

Harry's smile widened he thought of everyone he loved, as he did the last time. His parents, Remus, Sirius, Tonks, Molly, Arthur, Bill, Charlie, Fred, George and even Percy...Dumbledore, all his teachers, even Snape...yes...Luna, Neville...his two best friends...Ron and Hermione and ...Ginny, the girl he loved...Memories assaulted him, good memories, happy memories... he felt the curse hit him and everything was gone...

End Note: YES HARRY IS ALIVE! It was the Horcrux that was killed but we need a talk over in Limbo....

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